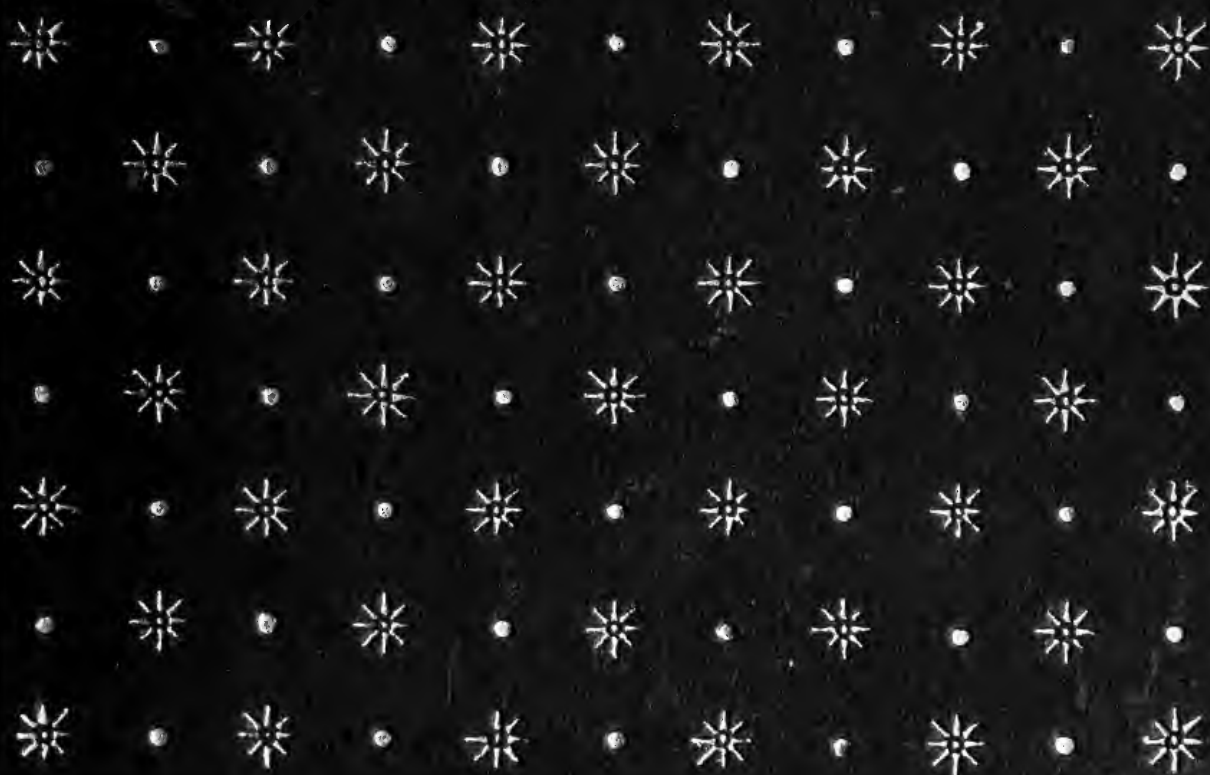




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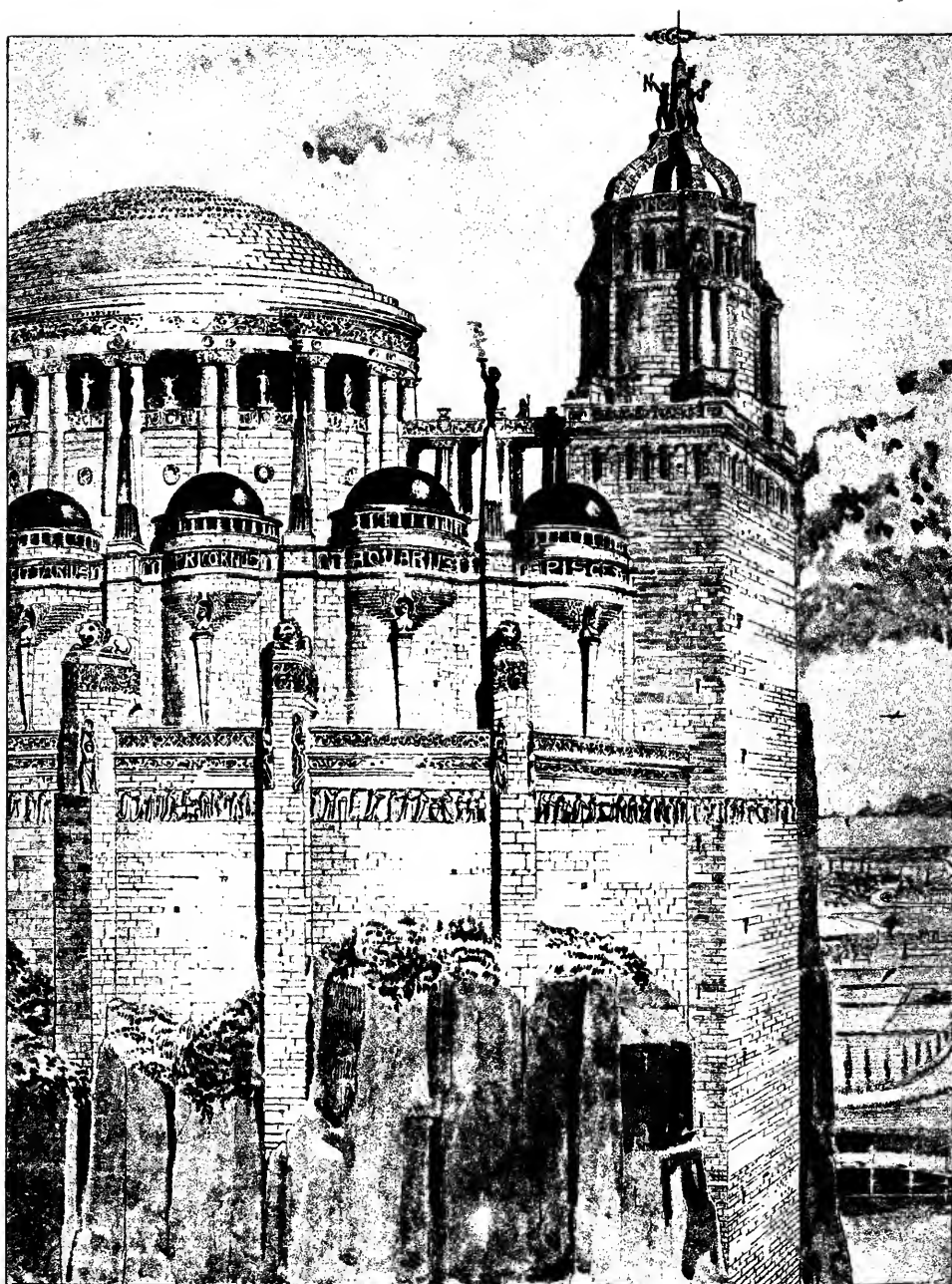
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INK PHOTO LONDON.

A CORNER OF THE "PALACE OF ART."

(See pages 111-112.)

"I built my soul a lordly pleasure house  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell."

# ARCHITECTURE AMONG THE POETS

BY

H. HEATHCOTE STATHAM

AUTHOR OF "ARCHITECTURE FOR GENERAL READERS,"  
"MODERN ARCHITECTURE," ETC.

WITH 13 ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

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## PREFACE

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A GOOD many years ago the author contributed to *The Builder*, anonymously, a short series of articles under the title "Architecture among the Poets." That this essay attracted some interest was evident from the fact that, as Editor of that journal, he has from time to time received enquiries as to the date of the articles, from correspondents wishing to obtain the back numbers containing them. The essay is here presented in a permanent form, re-written, revised, and with considerable additions, as well as with some illustrative sketches not before published.

H. H. S.

LONDON,

*June*, 1898.



## ARCHITECTURE AMONG THE POETS.

THERE is a peculiar and significant interest in the references made by poets to the discoveries of science or the creations of art, and the illustrations or imagery which they draw from these sources. For it is not until a subject has been, as we may say, popularised, has become a matter of general human interest or belief, that it can be regarded as an effective source of poetic illustration, seeing that poetic imagery deals with broad generalities and not with debateable matter, with perception and not with thought :

“ —Thought may take perception’s place,  
But hardly co-exist in any case.” \*

Thus, in science, the discoveries of one age become the poetry of the next. It was only after the revelations of geology as to the age

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\* Sordello.

of the earth, and the changes its surface has gone through, had become generally accepted that a poet could write—

“There rolls the deep where grew the tree;  
O earth, what changes hast thou seen;  
There, where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.”

It is for this reason that music, the most immaterial of all the arts, and the one which, in more or less sophisticated forms, has been most universally practised, has probably furnished more matter for poetic illustration and imagery than any other art; and next to that comes painting, which, taking the word in its widest scope, as including every method of graphic delineation, has come more home to men's business and bosoms than any other art appealing to the sense of sight. Sculpture and architecture, arts less understood of the people, have received proportionally less attention from the poets.

Yet the poetical references to architecture, even if we confine ourselves mainly, as I propose here, to those in our own language, are often of great beauty and interest, and are

worth more attention than they have received. Their interest, it may be observed, is of two kinds, poetic and historical. Architecture may be regarded, from one point of view, as the realisation of an imaginative conception in composition and outline; from another point of view, as the craft of building. Poetry has from time to time taken cognisance of it in both aspects. References to the craftsmanship or to the materials employed are often of interest as throwing historical light on the manner in which the art of architecture was regarded by the poet's contemporaries, and on its technical processes; such incidental references in poetry forming a kind of unconscious and unpremeditated testimony which is sometimes more significant than any more definite or consciously intended historical evidence. The other kind of interest in poetic allusions to architecture is of a more purely intellectual nature; that which arises from the employment by the poet of imagery drawn from architecture, or from the use of poetry to give vivid and picturesque descriptions of architecture. In both cases we are pleased by finding architecture drawn

from a semi-practical to a purely poetic sphere, which dignifies it for the moment to an exceptional degree. For the poet to make use of architectural imagery to heighten the force of his expression, is to put architecture and its associations to a very high use, and one entirely distinct from the prosaic or building side of the subject. On the other hand, the poetic description of an imaginary architecture, for its own sake and for its own interest as an object of intellectual contemplation, is often a means of suggesting to us new ideas on the subject, as well as an indication of the really high interest of the art in itself.

If we begin to look through the pages of poetry, however, for allusions to architecture, we shall find that, as with landscape, the perception of architectural picturesqueness or grandeur, as a subject worth reference and description in poetry, is a comparatively modern one, or at all events is one which belongs especially to a highly civilised epoch. From a poet's point of view, in fact, architecture has generally been regarded as part of a scene, a feature in the landscape ; and the feeling for landscape is

essentially a modern one. Some modern poets, however, as we shall have occasion to observe, have evinced in their writings a considerable interest in architecture for its own sake, by a number of very effective and picturesque allusions to, and descriptions of, architecture and architectural details. In the poetry of a less civilised age, architecture is mainly considered with reference to the richness and costliness of the materials employed. In Homer, for example, the few descriptions of architecture to be found are curiously artificial, and hardly convey to our minds the idea of any actual or possible building. When Ulysses arrives at the palace of Nausicaa's father, for instance, we have one of the very few bits of anything like detailed description of architecture in the Homeric poems (in the *Iliad* there is not one reference that can be called descriptive); but it is evidently an entirely fanciful description, telling us of silver columns with brazen bases, the walls of massy brass, the lintels of silver, &c. Yet this is significant of an age when overlaying of ordinary materials with precious metal was largely practised; the Homeric

palace is a dream of what might have been done if gold and silver were as plentiful as wood and stone; the solid silver lintel is substituted for the overlaying; the taste of the age for precious metals is reflected in the poem, only in a fantastic and exaggerated form, the poet evidently thinking that castles in the air might as well be built regardless of expense. Remarkable is the contrast between this and the most striking of the few references to architecture in Virgil—the fine passage in which he describes how, during the sack of Troy, the outer doors of Priam's palace were broken through, and the long corridors and halls suddenly appeared to view, in strange contrast with the tumult and clamour in the streets—

“ Ipse inter primos, correptâ dura bipenni  
Limina perrumpit, postes-que a cardine vellit  
Æratos; jamque excisâ trabe firma cavavit  
Robora, et ingentem lato dedit ore fenestram;  
Apparet domus intus, et atria longa patescunt;  
Apparent Priami et veterum penetralia regum,  
Armatos-que vident stantes in limine primo.”\*

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\* “He himself” (Automedon) “among the foremost, plying his two-edged battle-axe, breaks through the entrance, tearing



This is in quite a different tone from the Homeric architecture; it is the thought of a poet of an age of high civilisation, accustomed to the long columned interiors of the palaces and thermæ of Rome, and transferring his impressions of these to his description of the palace of ancient Troy. Even the epithet "æratos," which we may translate "bronzed" (*i.e.*, overlaid with bronze), indicates the kind of work which Virgil would be in the habit of constantly seeing before his eyes in Rome. Picturesque and effective as the description is, there is nothing in it which appears fabulous or merely imaginary; it is suggested by actual observation.

The passion for the architecture of precious metals and precious stones is met with again in the description of the Heavenly City, in the Book of Revelations, which, even if we

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the brass-covered doors from their hinges; now he has cut into the heart of the lintel itself, and leaves a huge wide-gaping opening; the long halls of the mansion lie open to view; the interior of the house, the private chambers of Priam and of the ancient kings are laid bare, and see armed men standing at their very doors."

accept it as written, according to the orthodox belief, at the close of the first century A.D., belongs to the literature, not of civilisation, but of revolt against civilisation, such as it existed under the Rome of the decadence. Here we are reminded of the Homeric fancy, in the description of the walls of jasper, the city and streets "of pure gold, like unto glass," the courses of the walls set with precious stones, and the gates each of a single pearl. If we adopt the fourth century theory of the authorship of the Book of Revelations, this gorgeous but barbaric description comes very near in time to, and seems to harmonise with, the taste for gold and silver ornament, and for the lining of the walls with costly marbles, which was to become such a characteristic of early Byzantine architecture.

When we compare the Homeric architecture with that of our own early poet, Chaucer, it is significant that we find in him just the same taste for an architecture of metals and precious stones, as if this were a natural tendency in poets belonging to an early and unsophisticated

school of literature. In the "Assembly of Foules,"\* the poet says—

"And upon pillars great of jasper long,  
I saw a temple of brass y-founded strong ;"

and in the "Court of Love,"\* he thus describes the castle wherein dwelt the king of love—

"For I beheld the toures high and strong,  
And high pinnacles, large of hight and long,  
With plate of gold bespred on every side,  
And precious stones, the stone-werke for to hide.

\* \* \* \*

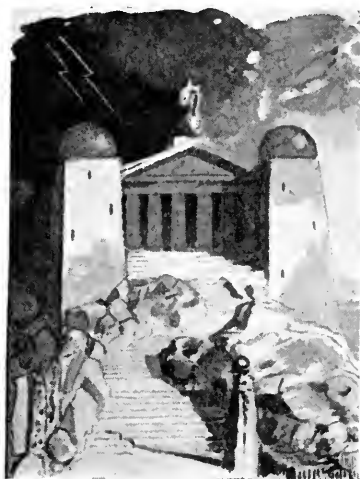
No saphire in Jude, nor rubie rich of price,  
There lacked than, nor emeraud so grene."

The latter couplet resembles the idea of the Book of Revelations, but it will be observed that Chaucer, or whoever of his contemporaries or imitators wrote these two poems, is more practical than the sacred writer, and distinctly describes the gold and precious stones as *appliqué* only, to hide the stone, and not as integral parts of the structure. In his description of the temple of Mars, in "The

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\* Both these poems are regarded as spurious or doubtful by Chaucer students; but they belong to his period, and therefore are just as good for the present argument as if they were Chaucer's own.

Knight's Tale," Chaucer apparently chooses his materials with a consideration as to what should be in keeping with the character of the deity housed therein—



"Ther stood the temple of Mars  
armipotent,  
Wrought all of burned\* steele,  
of which th' entree  
Was long and streit, and gastly  
for to see.

\* \* \* \*

The northern light in at the  
dore shone,  
For window on the wall ne was  
ther none  
Thurgh which men mighten  
any light discernen.  
The dore was all of athamant  
eterne,

Yclenched overthwart and endelong  
With yren tough, and, for to make it strong  
Everie piler the temple to sustene  
Was tonne-gret,† of yren bright and shene."

The special mention of the fact that there was no light into the temple except through the door is a very curious coincidence, since this is just the conclusion to which the latest

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\* Burnished.

† The circumference of a tun cask (?).

research and discussion has led us in regard to the lighting of Greek temples, though they did not generally, like Chaucer's temple of Mars, face to the north. No doubt the aspect towards the inclement quarter of the compass was chosen as appropriate to the stern character of the god of war. But it is an indication how little Chaucer thought of drawing upon actual architecture for his poetical descriptions, that, living as he did in the midst of the great Gothic building age, and in its richest if not quite its noblest phase, and with the monuments of its greatest period still comparatively new around him, he never refers in any way to the beauty of the mediæval cathedrals. The "Knight's Tale" is supposed to be told on the pilgrimage to the great cathedral of Canterbury, then almost in its pristine beauty; but the only architectural images are of these temples with steel pillars, and so on. The fact is doubly significant. It confirms, on the one hand, the opinion which has been sometimes suggested by modern writers, that the sentiment which we feel in regard to the mediæval cathedrals did not exist in the age

in which they were built, at all events as far as the general body of the people were concerned; it may have existed among the religious bodies. Chaucer reflects the spirit of the society of his day in a hundred characteristic indications, but enthusiasm for cathedral architecture appears nowhere in his writings; the only distant reference to the cathedrals at all, is where he describes the monk calling at a house and asking for subscriptions to defray their debt for building stone; indeed, the clergy themselves are the objects of Chaucer's frequent and unsparing satire. What is also to be observed in regard to these architectural descriptions of Chaucer's, is that they seem to imply an acquaintance, in some way or other, with the main forms of classic architecture. There is one little bit of decorative work alluded to in the same poem, which has indeed a little more of a mediæval touch about it. Theseus made three "oratories"—one to Venus, one to Mars,—

" And northward, in a touret on the wall,  
Of alabaster white and red corall,  
An oratorie riche for to see,  
In worship of Diane of chastitee."

“Touret” and “oratorie” sound mediæval, though not a turret “of alabaster and red coral”; there might, however, be a hint of such a thing in an illumination. Chaucer might, indeed be expected to mix up suggestions of pagan architecture (as far as he had any hint of it) with Christian, in accordance with the frequent practice of writers of the early revival of learning. There is again, in the same poem (the longest and most elaborate of the “Canterbury Tales”), a description of the amphitheatre constructed for the combat of Palamon and Arcite, which gives the idea that Chaucer was acquainted with the general form and characteristics of a Roman amphitheatre, and that he had a very practical idea as to the requirements for doing the thing well—

“The circuite a mile was about,  
Walled of stone, and diked all withoute,  
Round was the shape in manere of a compas,  
Full of degrees, the hight of sixty pas.”

This appears to refer to what we should now call the *section* of the amphitheatre, which was such that the exterior bounding wall rose

to the height of sixty paces. "Degrees," of course, are the stepped seats. He goes on to say how the seats were arranged so that no spectator should intercept the view from another—

"That when a man was set on o\* degree  
Him letted not his felaw for to see.  
Eastward there stood a gate of marbel white,  
Westward right swiche another in th' opposite.  
And shortly to concluden, swiche a place  
Was never in erth, in so litel a space,  
For in the land ther n'as no craftes man  
That geometric or arsmetricke can,  
Ne portreiour, nor kerver of images,  
That Theseus ne yaf him mele and wages,  
The theatre for to maken and devise."

Chaucer here indicates the complete conception of architecture as the result of the combined forces of the geometer and the artist. This poem is unquestionably Chaucer himself. The famous description of the palace of glass in the poem entitled "Chaucer's Dream" is perhaps too fantastical to take rank at all as an architectural passage, and the poem is of doubtful

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\* One.



authenticity; but the above quotation from the "Knight's Tale" seems to come not inappropriately from "Geoffrey Chaucer, clerke of werkes."

When we turn to Spenser, who (as Pope observed) "affects the obsolete," and imitates to some extent the style and orthography of the Chaucer school, we find in his few touches of architecture much the same characteristics as in the Chaucerian poems. Sometimes he repeats the purely bullion architecture, as we may call it—indeed he uses that very phrase ("Faerie Queene," III. 1, ver. 32)—

"The roiall riches and exceeding cost  
Of every pillour and of every post,  
Which all of purest bullion framed were,  
And with great perles and pretious stones embost;  
That the great glitter of their beames cleare  
Did sparckle forth great light, and glorious did appeare."

This is very sugar-candy architecture. On another occasion he seems inclined to be a little more practical, and to be content, like Chaucer, with merely overlaying the building materials with precious metals; but this on examination turns out to be only an allegory,

to illustrate the false display of Duessa's castle—

“A stately palace built of squared bricke  
Which cunningly was without mortar laid,  
Whose wals were high, but nothing strong or thick,  
And golden foil all over them displaied,  
That purest skye with brightness they dismaied ;  
High lifted up were many loftie towres,  
And goodly galleries far over laid,  
Full of faire windowes and delightful bowres ;  
And on the top a diall told the timely howres.

It was a goodly heape for to behould,  
And spake the praises of the workman's witt ;  
But full great pittie, that so faire a mould  
Did on so weak foundation ever sitt ;  
For on a sandie hill, that still did flitt  
And fall away, it mounted was full hie,  
That every breath of heaven shook it ;  
And all the hinder parts, that few could spie,  
Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.”

(“*Faerie Queene*,” I. 4, ver. 4.)

It would not be difficult to find some Duessa's castles, out of Fairyland, to fit part at least of this description ; but to the actual facts of architecture there is not a single reference in Spenser's poem, beyond the occasional mention of castles as frequently recurring phenomena.

The transition from Spenser to Milton is more natural than to Shakespeare, though a little out of chronology. Milton, with his stronger and more practical mind, was less given to mere toys of illustration than Spenser; yet he, in his epic, is carried away, not unnaturally, into the same kind of architectural conceptions as are expressed in the Book of Revelations; in his heaven, also, there sparkles a celestial architecture of gold and precious stones, and even also in the opposite region, where the palace of Pandemonium rose on the shores of the burning lake—

“Built like a temple, where pilasters round  
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid  
With golden architrave; nor did there want  
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven;  
The roof was fretted gold.”

Milton, acquainted as he was with the whole range of Latin and Italian literature, was of course familiar with the designations of the main parts of the classic temple—cornice, frieze, &c.; but the most notable expression in the above quotation is the phrase “bossy sculptures,” for the epithet shows that the

poet was fully alive to the decorative effect of sculpture as supplying a contrast to the smoother surfaces of the purely architectural features ; the use of the expression implies a critical eye for effect. The gate of heaven,



in Book iii., is described more in the vague and purely ideal manner in which Martin used to paint celestial architecture ; the gate is seen at the apex of the vast flight of steps, “degrees magnificent,” ascending to the wall of heaven, “at top whereof” (*i.e.*, of the steps)—

“ —But far more rich, appeared  
The work as of a kingly palace-gate  
With frontispiece of diamond and gold  
Embellished ; thick with sparkling orient gems  
The portal shone, inimitable on earth  
By model or by shading pencil drawn.”

The phrase “inimitable on earth,” is obviously a kind of excuse on the part of the poet for his inability to give any more definite

description; he prefers to leave it vague. The idea, at best, is somewhat poor and tawdry; so is the description of the palace in hell, at which the rebel angels mustered—

“——With pyramids and towers  
From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold.”

In “Paradise Regained” we have some elaborate descriptions not of celestial but of terrestrial architecture, that of Greece and Rome, in the vision of “all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them,” shown to the Saviour on the “mount of speculation;” but the architectural vision of the temples is not very clear; acting as showman of the spectacle of ancient Rome, he describes architectural features which certainly were never there—

“The Capitol thou seest  
Above the rest lifting his stately head  
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel  
Impregnable; and there Mount Palatine,  
The imperial palace, compass huge, and high  
The structure, skill of noblest architects,  
With *gilded battlements*, conspicuous far,  
Turrets, and terraces, and *glittering spires*.”

This falsity of impression as to the features

of ancient Roman architecture is worth notice, because we shall see, further on, with what admirable truth and vigour its actual characteristics are described by a modern poet who really understood the subject. Milton, however, shows a certain constructional perception in his description of the demolition of the Philistine theatre by Samson; he is careful to account for the fact that Samson should have held the stability of the structure in his own single grasp; it was, he tells us—

“ A spacious theatre,  
Half round, on two main columns vaulted high.”

The idea in his mind seems to have been that of a vault springing from the side walls, and meeting on coupled columns in the axis of the theatre; a construction which on a small scale (and the theatre was to hold only “ the Philistine lords ”—the vulgar stood without) is not impossible, though of course much more easily conceivable if we imagine it, not as “ half-round,” but an amphitheatre with a central pier, on the same principle of design as some of the mediæval chapter-houses.

This does not seem to have occurred to Milton ; still it is creditable to the logical side of his character as a poet, that he felt the necessity of making the catastrophe seem practicable. Milton, however, does occasionally give descriptions of existing as well as of imaginary architecture, in a way that Chaucer and Spenser never do ; as not only in the very well-known passage in “*Il Penseroso*,” describing the cathedral and its cloisters, and its vaulted roof and stained windows (which in his later days he would probably have helped to smash), but in the charming bit of landscape in “*L’Allegro*” in which we see towers and battlements—

“Bosom’d high mid tufted trees.”

Here the “battlements” are quite in place, and the passage shows that Milton appreciated the beautiful effect of heavy square-lined masses of building of the castle type, half seen amid thick foliage ; an incident which so many landscape-painters have enjoyed.

Our great poet *par excellence* is little troubled with architectural fancies ; he cared more for the human characters than for the houses

and cities they lived in, or the churches they worshipped in; and his allusions of any kind to architecture are few and far between. There is no hint of local colour in the scenery of the "Merchant of Venice," for instance, beyond the mere use of the word "Rialto," and the reference to a gondola; and the only direct architectural reference or illustration is one that is derived from Shakespeare's English life and experiences—

"Should I go to church  
And see the holy edifice of stone,  
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks ;"

a passage which shows emphatically how Shakespeare drew his scenic conceptions of a foreign city from what was before his own eyes in everyday life; one would have supposed that the slightest information he could have got about Venice would have shown him how inapplicable was such a reflection on the lips of a man living in a city of stone palaces. Shakespeare seems to have attached a special idea of dignity and spaciousness to the word "temple," which he brings in when he wishes



to be especially impressive, as in the noble invocation in "Coriolanus"—

"The honoured gods  
Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice  
Supplied with worthy men! Plant love among us!  
Throng our large temples with the shows of peace,  
And not our streets with war!"

And again in the well-known and still finer passage in "The Tempest," where he brings in the "solemn temples" and the "cloud-capped towers" (the latter expression a splendid hyperbole), as images of the most lasting and immovable things on earth. And in Shakespeare, also, it is to be observed, we find, for the first time in English poetry, the use of architectural imagery not merely for descriptive reasons, but to heighten poetic expression. Of this, which is the highest use to which poetry can put architecture, we find two examples, one in an exquisite line in the "Sonnets," where he refers to the leafless trees in winter as—

"Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang;"

the other in a beautiful speech of Valentine's in

that most unequal play, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" (Act V., sc. 4)—

"O thou that dost inhabit in my breast  
 Leave not the mansion too long tenantless,  
 Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall,  
 And leave no memory of what it was."

This is a noble use of architectural imagery, and in a very high strain; it is the more to be regretted that he spoils it by a "conceit" in the very next line—

"Repair me with thy presence, Silvia;"

the unfortunate word "repair" immediately suggesting a contract for repairs; one of the lines that Jonson might have wished he had "blotted." It is again observable that Verona, the city the very name of which is so full of architectural suggestiveness to the modern poet or reader, suggests nothing whatever to Shakespeare; Verona was to him a place on the map, or a name in an old *nouvelle*, and nothing more.\*

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\* I have never come across any comment on what seems a rather remarkable fact in connection with Shakespeare's writings, viz., the absolute silence, in the poems as well as in the dramas, as to the existence of the great monastic churches and their attendant buildings, which must at that

If Shakespeare's references to architecture are but few, they are at all events not trivial or prosaic in spirit; he obviously regarded it as an imaginative art, worthy to furnish poetic imagery to passages born of strong emotion. His dramatic compeers and immediate successors betray no such feeling in regard to the art; indeed, the conclusion to be drawn from most of the references to it, by English poets of all classes during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and part of the eighteenth, is that they regarded architecture with great indifference, and in fact often speak of it (as many English people do now) as something that

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time have been still prominent and numerous objects throughout the country, as well as in London. Only a generation separated Shakespeare from the time when Henry VIII. began to trample down the monastic orders. Many of their buildings which have now nearly disappeared, through having been used as stone-quarries for generations, must have been then architecturally complete; and Shakespeare, whatever foreign locality was nominally assigned to the action of any of his plays, drew all his ideas of the surroundings from English scenes. Yet there is hardly a hint of the existence of these great collections of buildings with which England was then covered, or of their having attracted the notice of the poet or produced any impression upon his mind at all.

is in its nature opposed to practical considerations and to common sense. This is evidently the view taken by Ben Jonson. Almost the only reference to architecture in his plays is put into the mouth of the silly Crispinus, in "The Poetaster," the bore of the play, who pesters Horace (Act III., sc. 1) with his talk and criticism as they walk through the city—

"By Phœbus, here's a most neat fine street, isn't it? I protest to thee I am enamoured of this street, more than of half the streets of Rome again; 'tis so polite and terse! There's a front of a building now! I study architecture too. If ever I should build, I'd have a house just of that prospective."

Crispinus seems to have been given to talk architecture, as he applies it afterwards to a lady's head-dress—"I affect not these high gable-ends, these Tuscan-tops, nor your arches, nor your coronets, nor your pyramids." In one of Ben Jonson's poems, "To Penshurst," his own practical notions on the subject come out—

"Thou art not, Penshurst, built to curious show  
Of touch or marble, nor can'st boast a row  
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold;  
Thou hast no lantern, whereof tales are told,  
Or stair, or court; thou stand'st an ancient pile,  
And, these not grudged, art revered the while;  
Thou joy'st in better marks—of soil, of air,  
Of wood, of water; therein art thou fair."

Perhaps this feeling on the part of Jonson, with whom dramatic poetry was emphatically "a criticism of life," as well as with some of his successors, originated in the spectacle of that passion for and rivalry in the erection of great mansions, which arose in Elizabeth's day, and led sometimes to a nobleman or country gentleman spending so much money over a house, that he had none left to keep it up or live in it; as Bacon's well-known pithy sentence at the opening of his essay "On Building"—"Houses are built to live in, not to look at," was no doubt intended as a criticism in the same direction. The point of Bacon's sentence, and the reason for putting such a sentiment in the forefront of his essay, cannot be fully appreciated unless we recollect this habit of the times, and the amount of lavish expenditure on rival mansions which was going on at the time. The odd thing is, that after making this criticism, he should proceed to give a description of an ideal nobleman's house, more sumptuous and on a greater scale than any that he could have seen in process of building.

The opinion as to the superior value of

situation and comfort above architectural effect, indicated in the above quotation from Ben Jonson, is expressed at greater length by Carew, in verses addressed "To his friend G. N., from Wrest," the name of a country house at which the poet was staying—

" Here the architect  
Did not with curious skill a pile erect  
Of carved marble, touch or prophecy,  
But built a house for hospitality.  
No sumptuous chimney piece of shining stone  
Invites the stranger's eye to gaze upon  
And coldly entertain his sight ; but clear  
And cheerful flames cherish and warm him here  
No Doric or Corinthian pillars grace  
With imagery this structure's naked face ;  
The lord and lady of this place delight  
Rather to be in act, than seem in sight.

\* \* \* \*

Nor think because our pyramids and high  
Exalted turrets threaten not the sky,  
That therefore Wrest of narrowness complains,  
Or straiten'd walls ; for she more numerous trains  
Of noble guests daily receives, and those  
Can with far more conveniency dispose,  
Than prouder piles, where the vain builder spent  
More cost in outward gay embellishment  
Than real use, which was the sole design  
Of our contriver, who made things not fine,  
But fit for service."

That is the true and typical "English gentleman's" view of what is desirable in a country house; eminently sensible, no doubt, but hardly what one would expect from a poet; unless indeed (which is quite possible) the worthy Carew was moved by the desire to compliment the house whose hospitality he was enjoying.

To return to the dramatists for a moment, the only two passages I have hit upon in the leading poets of the Elizabethan and Stuart period, consist of a single architectural metaphor in Massinger ("The Fatal Dowry")—

" I raised  
The building of my life, for seventy years,  
Upon so sure a ground, that all the vices  
Practised to ruin man, though brought against me,  
Could never undermine; " \*

---

\* One may contrast with this the thought in Mr. Watson's gloomy and tragic little poem "Life without Health"—

"Behold life builded as a goodly house,  
And grown a mansion ruinous  
With winter blowing through its crumbling walls!  
The master paceth up and down his halls,  
And in the empty hours  
Can hear the tottering of his towers  
And tremor of their bases underground."

And again—one more contrast—the exquisitely spiritual

and one passage out of the voluminous pages of Beaumont and Fletcher, which is curious as showing again that notion of diamonds and precious stones as elements in the effect of ancient or ideal architecture, which we have already noticed in Chaucer and Spenser—the passage is from “Philaster”—

“No monument  
 (Though high and big as Pelion) shall be able  
 To cover this base murder; make it rich  
 Like brass, with purest gold, and shining jasper  
*Like the Pyramides* . . . . .  
 . . . . . my little marble  
 (That only clothes my ashes, not my faults)  
 Shall far outshine it.”

The reference to the Pyramids as composed “of gold and shining jasper,” throws an interesting light on the remark in regard to them which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Lepidus, in the after-dinner gabble on board Pompey’s galley (“Antony and Cleopatra”)—“Certainly I have heard the Ptolemies’

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fancy of Waller, referring to the hope of immortality when life is declining—

“The soul’s dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
 Lets in new light through chinks which time has made.”



Pyramises are very goodly things; without contradiction, I have heard that." Evidently, in those days when Egypt was a *terra incognita*, the Pyramids enjoyed a general but vague reputation as wonderful structures of some kind, which, on the *omne ignotum* principle, were supposed to be remarkable for barbaric splendour as well as for size.

One ought not to pass over, in speaking of the dramatic poets, the once hackneyed though now nearly forgotten lines in Congreve's "Mourning Bride," which Dr. Johnson cited as the most sublime passage in English poetry—

"How reverend is the face of this tall pile,  
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads  
To bear aloft its arched and ponderous roof,  
By its own weight made steadfast and immoveable,  
Looking tranquillity. It strikes an awe  
And terror on the aching sight," &c.

The lines, though not of course worth the extravagant praise of the critic who thought Lycidus "vulgar," are really fine, but they afford a curious example of the poet's utterly confused ideas as to local and historical differences of architectural style. It is generally supposed, and is probable, that the lines were

really inspired by Westminster Abbey; the description suggests a vaulted interior, and the expression "by its own weight made steadfast," though perhaps Congreve did not exactly know what he meant by it, really seems like a poetic intuition of that balance of thrusts on which the stability of a mediæval vaulted building depends. But the "columns," with their "marble heads," are mere conventional properties out of keeping with the rest of the description; the scene is described as "the aisle of the temple," and this "temple" is supposed to be at Granada, of all places in the world, where the action of the play lies. It would be difficult to fit a greater number of incongruous architectural suggestions into so few lines.

Going back to the poets other than dramatic, we find in Cowley an oddly contradictory attitude of mind on the subject; an admiration for great architecture, coupled with a moral reprobation of it (real or affected), as an element of the pride of life. Thus in "Constantia and Philetus," he refers to the city of Florence as—

"For stately buildings famed  
And lofty roofs that emulate the sky;"

but of one of the characters in the same poem we read that—

“ In roofs that gold and Parian stone adorn  
(Proud as the owner’s mind) he did abound,”

where the parenthesis certainly appears to be an insinuation against the propriety of sumptuous buildings; and in the same spirit we find him expressing his personal feelings (or what he wishes us to accept as such) in the poem entitled “ The Wish ”—

“ My house a cottage more  
Than palace, and should fitting be  
For all my use, not luxury.”

But it may be doubted whether this, like Pope’s over-acted and conventional praise of rural life, was not an affectation, a pride that aped humility. That Cowley, at all events, could get up a real interest in the restoration of a great building, he has shown in his spirited lines “ On the Queen’s \* repairing Somerset

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\* Henrietta Maria, to whom old Somerset House had been assigned by Charles I. as a private residence, and who returned to it and repaired it at the Restoration. The building had been much knocked about during the Protectorate.

House." The building is made to speak *in propria personâ*—

"In all my rooms and galleries I found  
The richest figures torn, and all around  
Dismember'd statues of great heroes lay."

\* \* \* \*

The gaping walls were cleft,  
The pillars sunk, the rooms above me wept,  
No sign of spring, or joy, my garden kept."

Then the palace goes on to say how changed  
is his face since his great mistress—indeed she  
might rightly be called foundress—took up  
the matter—

"Now I dare  
Even with the proudest palaces compare.

\* \* \* \*

Before my gate a street's broad channel goes  
Which still with waves of crowding people flows ;  
And every day there passes by my side,  
Up to its western reach, the London tide,  
The spring-tides of the term ; my front looks down  
On all the pride and business of the town ;  
My other front (for as in kings we see  
The liveliest image of the Deity,  
We in their houses should Heaven's likeness find  
*Where nothing can be said to be behind*)  
My other fair and more majestic face  
(Who can the fair to more advantage place ?)  
For ever gazes on itself below  
In the best mirror that the world can show.

\* \* \* \*

To assure yet my defence, on either hand  
Like mighty forts, at equal distance stand,  
Two of the best and stateliest piles which e'er  
Man's liberal piety of old did rear,  
Where the two princes of the Apostles' band  
My neighbours and my guards, watch and command."

This idea of the palace as being centrally placed between the two great cathedrals of London\* and Westminster, though certainly rather out of proportion with the subject of the poem, shows nevertheless a fine feeling for architectural association and grouping; and the line italicised above, referring to the principle that a great building should architecturally "front" both ways, that no part of it should be a "back elevation," is a really good point of architectural criticism. The same event drew forth a poem from Waller (too poor to be worth quoting), who likewise delivered himself in verse "Upon His Majesty's repairing of St. Paul's," and compared Charles II. to Amphion, who caused the walls of Troy to rise.

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\* This of course was old St. Paul's—the mediæval St. Paul's, burned in the Fire of London, six years after the date of Cowley's poem.

But though Cowley could be roused to some enthusiasm about Somerset House (and there is certainly more in the poem than mere court compliment), we find him returning to his anti-architectural ideas in his poem "On Solitude."

"Hail, old patrician trees !

\* \* \* \*

Here Nature does a house for me erect ;  
Nature, the fairest architect,  
Who those fond artists does despise  
That can the fair and living trees neglect,  
Yet the dead timber prize,"—

one of Cowley's brilliant conceits ; a mere conceit, for of course what is prized in architecture is not the "dead timber" (or whatever other material be used), but the form into which it is shaped, and the thought expressed in the form ; and so far from the two tastes being antagonistic, those who love Nature best are those who also love Art best. The practical question of shelter Cowley seems to have rather overlooked, unless he contemplated living like the Bohemian *littérateur* in Paris, who gave his address as "Boulevard —, fifth tree, third branch."

He returns to the charge, however, in the same spirit in another poem, "The Garden," in which he shows how great buildings were contrary to the divine order of things—

"For God, the universal Architect,  
It had been as easy to erect  
A Louvre or Escorial, or a tower  
That might with heaven communication hold,  
As Babel vainly thought to do of old :  
He wanted not the skill or power——

\* \* \* \*

But well he knew what place would best agree  
With innocence and with felicity——

\* \* \* \*

God the first garden made, and the first city Cain."\*

Pretty fancies for summer weather, in which Cowley much delighted.

Dryden thinks no more of architects and architecture than his predecessors. The only lengthened reference to the subject in his poems, is in his paraphrase (rather than translation) of Boileau's "Art of Poetry," in which he instances the overlaboured description

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\* "God Almighty first planted a garden, and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures."—Bacon's Essay "On Gardening."

of a mansion, as an example of one kind of fault in poetic style—

“ Sometimes an author, fond of his own thought,  
Pursues its object till 'tis overwrought ;  
If he describes a house he shows the face,  
And after walks you round from place to place ;  
Here is a vista, there the doors unfold,  
Balconies here are balustered with gold ;  
Then counts the rounds and ovals in the halls,  
' The festoons, friezes, and the astragals.' ”

It is noteworthy that he puts the last line between commas, as if he regarded the words used in it as architectural “shop,” not admissible in poetry save in an apologetic manner. That a description of architecture, in the piecemeal matter-of-fact manner alluded to, is unpoetical and uninteresting, no one would deny, but not on account of its length or elaboration, for modern poets who have really a feeling for architecture and for structure can go into considerable detail (as we shall have occasion to see) without becoming either redundant or prosaic. That Dryden had not much more respect for architects than for architecture is implied in another passage in his works, in which he introduces a description of a man



who had been a quack physician, and, after killing many people with his drugs, retired from practice to live at a friend's country house, where he showed what he was really good for, by making great practical improvements; and the moral (substituting literature for medicine) is, "Better be a good mason than a bad poet"; mason and architect being apparently convertible terms. Swift had more perception than that; see one of his epistles to Stella, in which he says she is indirectly to be credited with whatever good he may accomplish, as being the person who inspires him—

"As when a lofty pile is raised,  
We never hear the workmen praised  
Who bring the lime and place the stones,  
But all admire Inigo Jones;"

whence also we may gather that the great architect's christian name was then pronounced "Inigo," and not "Inigo" according to modern fashion. Swift once or twice also presses architectural or building metaphors into his service, most pointedly in a poem on the true basis of happiness in married life ("Strephon and Chloe"), equally remarkable for its real

good sense and morality, and for its coarseness of expression, the architectural simile being one of the few decent passages in it:—

“A prudent builder should forecast  
How long the stuff is like to last ;  
And carefully observe the ground,  
To build on some foundation sound.  
What house when its materials crumble  
Must not inevitably tumble ?  
What edifice can long endure,  
Raised on a basis insecure ?  
Rash mortals, ere you take a wife,  
Contrive your pile to last a life.”

Considering what was the state to which Dublin Cathedral had come, before its modern repair was taken in hand, one may imagine that the Dean of St. Patrick's had official reasons for being occupied with illustrations derived from ruinous buildings.

Pope sings in the same key as a good many of his predecessors and contemporaries, in regard to the advantage of looking at architecture from a practical point of view ; but he speaks in the tone of a man far more cultured in artistic matters than Dryden or Swift, and handles the subject with far more knowledge of detail and far more graphic expression than

most, or indeed any of the poets of his era. The passage addressed to the Earl of Burlington (Epistle iv.), who was then publishing at his own expense designs by Inigo Jones, and the “Antiquities of Rome” by Palladio, is full of force and picturesqueness as well as artistic good sense; it immediately follows the well-known sneer at “Sir Visto” and at Bubo; the latter—

“A standing sermon, at each year’s expense,  
That never Coxcomb reached magnificence—

a remark the truth of which has been often illustrated in the architectural speculations of wealthy but vulgar-minded people. Then he goes on, addressing Lord Burlington, to distinguish between truly sumptuous architecture and misuse of the resources of the art—

“You show us Rome was glorious, not profuse,  
And pompous buildings once were things of use;  
Yet shall, my lord, your just, your noble rules,  
Fill half the land with imitating fools,  
Who random drawings from your sheets shall take,  
And of one beauty many blunders make;  
Load some vain church with old theatric state,  
Turn arcs of triumph to a garden gate;  
Reverse your ornaments, and hang them all  
On some patch’d dog-hole eked with ends of wall;

Then clap four slices of pilaster on't  
That, laced with bits of rustic, makes a front ;  
Shall call the winds through long arcades to roar,  
Proud to catch cold at a Venetian door ;  
Conscious they act a true Palladian part,  
And if they starve, they starve by rules of art."

With the exception of the last two lines, which give rather an incorrect notion as to the Palladian system, there is sense and sound criticism in every line of this, and a whole architectural essay might be written on the various points which it suggests, and on the manner in which modern architectural practice has borne out Pope's prophecy. His little epigrammatic poem on "The Duke of Marlborough's house at Woodstock" is also very good, and in the same vein of shrewd and satirical common sense—

" See here, Sir, here's the grand approach,  
This way is for his Grace's coach ;  
There lies the bridge and here's the clock,  
Observe the lion and the cock,  
The spacious court, the colonnade,  
And mark how wide the hall is made.  
The chimneys are so well designed  
They never smoke in any wind ;  
This gallery's contrived for walking,  
The window's to retire and talk in ;

The Council Chamber for debate,  
And all the rest are rooms of state.

Thanks, Sir, cried I, 'tis very fine,  
But where d'ye sleep, or where d'ye dine ?  
I find by all you have been telling,  
That 'tis a house, but not a dwelling."

It is noticeable that Pope, in his modernised paraphrase of Chaucer's "House of Fame," introduces architectural sketches entirely his own, and having no relation to anything in the original poem ; and these architectural descriptions are of a more imaginative and sumptuous turn than is usual with him. The difference between the architectural references in Chaucer's poem and those in Pope's free imitation of it, is characteristic. Chaucer's is the old barbaric architecture before referred to as so common in the imagination of poets of a juvenile age. He sketches a "castell" in which—

"All was of stone of berile,  
Both the castell and the toure,  
And eke the hall and every boure,  
Without peeces or joynings,  
But many subtell compassings,  
As babeuries and pinnacles,  
Imageries and tabernacles  
I saw, and eke full of windowes  
As flakes fallen in great snowes."

The last expression is curious. Does it refer to the shape of the pointed window, or of the compartments of the tracery? Or is it merely a hyperbolical simile to indicate the great number of the windows? A further incident in this part of the poem is the introduction of pillars of different metals and other substances, as pedestals for the statues of famous men, and apparently selected for the supposed suitability or significance of the material in each case, or its gradation in costliness. Thus Homer stood upon an iron pillar, Virgil upon one "of tinned iron clere," which suggests something like the modern galvanised iron; it is difficult to understand quite what Chaucer meant by the expression, unless it were iron coated with tin to give it lustre. Ovid stands on a pillar of copper; and so on. Pope, in his paraphrase, adopts the idea of the columns, but gives them great profusion of ornament and describes them at much length, though not in a very graphic manner; but he raises a structure over these columns (which are planted in a circle), of which there is no hint in Chaucer—a dome covered with gems, under

which Fame herself was enthroned, and which reflects the various coloured lights of the pavement, and the light radiating from the throne. Unfortunately the description is too conventional, and too full of mere rhyming-dictionary lines, to convey any sense of reality to the reader; and though the passage is ambitious and grandiose in intention, it is not worth quoting. In the description of the exterior of the temple, at the commencement of the poem, there are one or two points made, as in the passage about the western front—

“Crown’d with an architrave of antique mould,  
With sculpture rising on the roughen’d gold.”

The latter expression indicates an eye for the effect of texture in surfaces, which seldom crops up in architectural allusions of the eighteenth century, and since the mediæval period, in fact, seems not to have been revived until our own day. On the whole, however, Pope is much better in his references to existing types of architecture than in his attempts at idealising architecture—always a difficult task, whether for poet or draughtsman. We ought not to pass over, however, one very clever and

well expressed passage, in the Epistle to Addison, occasioned by some dissertations of the latter upon medals. Here Pope draws, in very picturesque language, a contrast between the comparatively transient nature of great buildings as monuments, how they lose their meaning and history, and the durability of a fame inscribed upon medals, in the form of profiles and inscriptions—

“Ambition sigh’d ; she found it vain to trust  
The faithless column or the crumbling bust ;  
Huge moles, whose shadows stretch’d from shore to shore,  
Their ruins perish’d, and their place no more.  
Convinced, she now contracts her vast design,  
And all her triumphs shrink into a coin,”—

which last is an abominably bad rhyme ;  
but he hits off very happily the medal and its connoisseurs—

“With sharpen’d sight pale antiquaries pore,  
The inscription value, but the rust adore ;  
This the blue varnish, that the green endears,  
The sacred rust of twice ten hundred years.  
To gain Pescennius one employs his schemes,  
One grasps a Cecrops in ecstatic dreams ;  
Poor Vadius, long with learned spleen devour’d,  
Can taste no pleasure since his shield was scour’d ;  
And Curio, restless by the fair one’s side,  
Sighs for an Otho, and neglects his bride.”



But in spite of this preference of medallic over architectural glory, the poem commences with a few lines about architecture which strike a new note, and connect it with a more modern phase of feeling—

“ See the wild waste of all-  
devouring years !  
How Rome her own sad  
sepulchre appears !  
With nodding arches, broken  
temples spread,” &c.

It is not worth while to follow further a passage which is in Pope's most conventional style ; but it is observable that here we have one of the first expressions in English poetry of that interest in the ruins of past ages, and of classic antiquity especially, which is peculiarly a modern feeling, and which, in regard to Rome, received such fine expression by Byron a century or so later. We in the present day are so used to regard the ruins of ancient buildings as of picturesque and poetic interest, that we are apt to forget that this feeling only came



into existence in modern times. To a Greek, a Roman, or a mediæval traveller, a ruined building was no more poetic than a broken chair; it might excite a speculative interest, no doubt, as to its original use and its appearance when complete, but it was not "romantic." Even to the Renaissance architects, who paid so much attention to the remains of Roman buildings, these remains were of value for the study of architectural detail, which they wished to reproduce or to imitate, not from a feeling of sentiment. But here we have Pope giving voice for the first time to the new feeling as to the poetic interest of ruined architecture; and so quickly did this develop, that scarcely half a century later, John and Robert Adam were publishing, in their "*Works in Architecture*," designs for "ruined" bridges and temples for the decoration of parks.

Though Byron is now naturally predominant in our minds as the poet of ruined Rome, there were not wanting earlier English poets who apparently had a strong feeling on

the subject, and attempted at least to give adequate expression to it in verse. Of these, the most prominent was that gentle and unsophisticated poet, the Rev. John Dyer, mostly reputed in literature as the author of "The Fleece," a poem which has long ceased to be read except by literary students, but who had evidently a thoughtful appreciation of the architectural remains of antiquity, and embodied his feelings on the subject in a poem entitled "The Ruins of Rome" (published in 1740), which is not without its interest as a landmark of the progress of thought in these matters, and as furnishing us with a hint as to the aspect of ancient Rome before any one had brought up schemes of exploration and disinterment. He describes a scene in which the architectural remains are half lost amid the growths of Nature:—

"Globose and huge,  
Grey mouldering temples swell, and wide o'ercast  
The solitary landscape, while the vine-mantled brows  
The pendent goats unveil ; regardless they  
Of hourly peril, though the clifted domes  
Tremble to every wind. The pilgrim oft,  
At dead of night, 'mid his oraison, hears  
Aghast the voice of Time, disparting towers."

A.P.

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This last expression carries us vividly back to the time when ruins such as those in Rome were left literally to “drop arch by arch,” and the process of decay could be seen actually going on unchecked :—

“Pleased, I move along  
 ’Mid vases bossed,\* and huge inscriptive stones,  
 And intermingling vines, and figured nymphs,  
 Floras and Chloes of delicious mould  
 Cheering the darkness ; and deep empty tombs  
 And dells, and mouldering shrines with old decay  
 Rustic and green, and wide embowering shades  
 Shot from the crooked clefts of nodding towers ;  
 A solemn wilderness.”

Dyer comes to the architectural side of the subject as he contemplates the Pantheon, “noblest work of human skill,” and suggests its usefulness as a study for the modern architect :—

“Here, curious architect,  
 If thou essayest, ambitious to surpass  
 Palladio, Angelo, or British Jones,  
 On these fair walls extend the certain scale  
 And turn th’ instructive compass ; † careful mark

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\* Compare this with Milton’s “bossy sculptures,” and the remarks thereupon, page 17.

† Dyer seems to have had a notion of what architects call measured drawings.”

How far, in hidden art, the noble plain  
Extends, and where the lovely forms commence  
Of flowering sculptures ; \* nor neglect to note  
How range the taper columns, and what weight  
Their leafy brows sustain."

The ancient roads in the vicinity of Rome  
have their suggestiveness :—

" And see from every gate those ancient roads  
With tombs high verged, the solemn paths of Fame ;  
Deserve they not regard ? O'er whose broad flints  
Such crowds have rolled, so many storms of war,  
So many pomps, so many wondering realms."

The special interest of Trajan's column is  
happily touched upon—

" From whose low base the sculptures wind aloft,  
And lead, through various toils, up the rough steep,  
The hero to the skies."

And he remarks also on what has not always  
been appreciated, the enormous wealth of  
Rome in antiquarian remnants, in spite of the  
many collections already drawn from her vast  
store :—

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\* *I.e.*, what was the proportion between plain wall and decorative surfaces—a very important point in architectural design, in regard to the total effect of the building. Dyer had evidently something more than an ordinary amateur's notions about architecture. (He had, in fact, begun life as a painter, but did not succeed.)

“And every realm and state  
With Rome’s august remains, heroes and gods,  
Deck their long galleries and winding groves ;  
Yet miss we not the innumerable thefts,  
Yet still profuse of graces teems the waste.”

Dyer’s best work, perhaps, is “Grongar Hill,” which still keeps its place as a readable descriptive poem, and here he does not fail to notice the architectural features in the landscape ; looking from an eminence :—

“Old castles on the cliffs arise  
Proudly towering in the skies ;  
Rushing from the woods, the spires  
Seem from hence ascending fires.”

The last couplet might pass for a spirited expression ; but alas ! a little inspection of the poetry of the period shows that it was only the cant language of the day ; spires always “rush into the sky” during the reign of the school of poetry to which Dyer belonged. But his meditations on the ruins of Rome have a certain individuality, perhaps because he had with that subject got a little out of the usual groove of the English poetry of the period.

As a contrast to Dyer’s glorification of the architectural relics of antiquity may be quoted

Thomson's reflections anent them, in a poem in honour of Newton, in which he observes how far above mere material monuments stands the fame of the great astronomer :—

“Ye mouldering stones  
That build the towering pyramid, the proud  
Triumphal arch, the monument effaced  
Of ruthless ruin, and whate'er supports  
The worshipp'd name of hoar antiquity,  
Down to the dust ! what grandeur can ye boast,  
While Newton lifts his column to the skies  
Beyond the waste of Time ?”

In Thomson's “Castle of Indolence,” charming poem as it is, the castle, though he professes to describe it, is really nowhere in the matter ; the situation, the landscape, and the personages only are described ; and “The Seasons” naturally does not lead much into the land of architecture. In his poem “On Liberty,” however, he pays a tribute to the greatness of Greece in arts as well as in political freedom, going into some little detail on the subject, not perhaps in a very critical spirit, but with a certain perception. The passage has a historical interest as an example of the absolute certainty which most cultured men of that

day entertained in regard to the pre-eminence of Classic, and the comparative worthlessness of Gothic architecture. He addresses Greece as supreme in the ranks of architecture :—

“That art where most magnificent appears  
The little builder, man ; by thee refined,  
And, smiling high, to full perfection brought.  
Such thy sure rules, that Goths of every age,  
Who scorn their aid, have only loaded earth  
With labour'd heavy monuments of shame ; (!)  
Not those gay domes \* that o'er thy splendid shore  
Shot, all proportion, up. First, unadorned,  
And nobly plain, the manly Doric rose ;  
Th' Ionic then, with decent matron grace,  
Her airy pillar heaved ; luxuriant last,  
The rich Corinthian spread her wanton wreath.  
The whole so measured true, so lessened off  
By fine proportion, that the marble piles,  
Form'd to repel the still or stormy waste  
Of rolling ages, light as fabrics look,  
That from the magic wand aërial rise.”

It is curious to contrast this with the protest in favour of Gothic architecture made only a very little later, by Thomas Warton, poet and

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\* Thomson, we see, is as inaccurate as Milton ; attributing domes to Greek architecture as lightly as Milton attributed spires to Roman. It is only in quite recent times that accuracy of expression in such matters has appeared of any consequence to poets.



historian of poetry ; as a poet, indeed, of very minor fame (though he wrote some really pretty things), but a scholar of very wide and general culture. His protest gains additional interest from the fact that it was made *apropos* of the design by Reynolds for the stained-glass windows at New College, Oxford, which displeased Warton as being out of keeping with the spirit of mediæval architecture, about which he seems to have had the same kind of feeling and appreciation that Horace Walpole boasted of. He begins by appealing to those concerned with the new window to stay their hand :—

“ Forbear to trace  
 These faultless forms of elegance and grace,  
 \*                      \*                      \*                      \*  
 Nor cheat by strokes of art, with truth combined,  
 The fond illusions of my wayward mind.”

This is a surprisingly modern sentiment ; had Warton lived in the present day he would evidently have been among the opponents of “ restoration.” For he had been one, he goes on to say, who had loved this quaint mediæval art ; one who would :—

"With Gothic manners Gothic arts explore,  
 And muse on the magnificence of yore.  
 But chief enraptured have I loved to roam,  
 A lingering votary, the vaulted dome,  
 Where the tall shafts, that mount in massy pride,  
 Their mingling branches shoot from side to side ;  
 Where elfin sculptors with fantastic clue  
 O'er the long roof their wild embroidery drew ;  
 When superstition, with capricious hand,  
 In many a maze the wreathed window planned,  
 With hues romantic tinged the gorgeous pane  
 To fill with holy light the wondrous fane,  
 To aid the builder's model, richly rude,  
 By no Vitruvian symmetry subdued."

Why "superstition" should be supposed to be specially concerned with the designing of traceried windows and stained glass is not very apparent ; but, nevertheless, the feeling expressed by Warton for Gothic architecture is in advance of his day. The poet, however, it is rather disappointing to add, is eventually converted, on a further study of Reynolds's designs, and comes to the conclusion that Reynolds had been providentially appointed—

"By arts unknown before, to reconcile  
 The willing Graces to the Gothic pile."

How astonished Warton would have been could any one have told him that a century

later the “richly rude” architecture of which he spoke so condescendingly would be regarded as superior to anything done on the most approved Vitruvian models, and Reynolds’s intrusion as a kind of artistic profanity. But thus the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges. Before quitting Warton, we may notice a pretty touch in his poem addressed to a friend who was reluctantly leaving a favourite village in Hampshire ; when he has left, asks the poet—

“ Who now shall mark  
The cot that smokes with early fire,  
The low-roof’d fane’s embosom’d spire ?  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Who, through the sunshine and the shower,  
Descry the rainbow-painted tower ? ”

That last line is a real bit of colour, and evidently from observation.

Gray’s one distinct reference to architecture arises, like some of those quoted in previous pages, from the wish to describe a house he had been staying at, and is noticeable for one passage of very wide application ; it occurs in a rather lightly written poem, entitled “ A Long Story ” :—

“In Britain’s isle, no matter where,  
An ancient pile of building stands ;  
The Huntingdons and Hattons there  
Employ’d the power of fairy hands,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
To raise the ceiling’s fretted height,  
Each pannell in achievements clothing,  
Rich windows that exclude the light,  
And passages that lead to nothing.”

The last couplet has been frequently quoted in reference to architecture, often probably by writers who had no idea of its origin ; its point consists in the fact that it is not only a description of one building, but sums up neatly characteristics which belong to all architecture that is built for show rather than for the direct expression of practical ends, and forms a very concise and concentrated bit of architectural criticism, expressed with peculiar felicity of phrase. It is rare to meet with any architectural reference so full of meaning as this among English poets previous to the present century, or one may say, indeed, previous to the last generation, for it is in the writings of poets only recently deceased that we find more of true art-criticism than among any of their predecessors.

We may conclude our quotations from the older English poets by one from the imitation antique of Chatterton, in the famous concoc-tions which he wished to pass off as those of a mediæval poet. As Chatterton placed the *habitat* of the imaginary Rowley in his own city of Bristol, the spire of Redcliffe church, the most conspicuous architectural object in Bristol, naturally suggested itself to him as an incident in the scene about which Rowley might have something to say—which he says in this wise :—

“ Stay, curyous traveller, and passe not bye,  
 Until this festive pile astounds thine eye ;  
 Whole rocks on rocks with yron joyn’d surveie,  
 And okes with okes entremed dispoñed lie,  
 This mightie pile, that keeps the wyndes at baie,  
 Fire-levin and the mokie storm defie,  
 That shoots aloft into the reaulmes of daie,  
 Shall be the record of the buylder’s fame for aie.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

Well mays’t thou be astound, but view it well ;  
 Go not from hence before thou see thy fill,  
 And learn the buylder’s virtues and his name ;  
 Of this talle spire in every country telle,  
 And with thy tale the lazing rich men shame ;  
 Showe how the glorious Canynge did excelle.”

“ Rowley ” is not very profound in his reflec-

tions ; and, indeed, one may say there needed no ghost from the Middle Ages to tell us this.

One very voluminous English poet, little if ever read now, Joanna Baillie, should not be entirely passed over here. In the dramas which form the bulk of her works, Joanna Baillie, like most dramatic poets, is naturally more occupied with personages than with the scenic setting, though it may be observed that her directions for the arrangement of the scenes are very elaborate, and are frequently occupied to a considerable extent with the arrangement of the architectural portion of the scene ; but to quote these would be going rather beyond the proper scope of these pages. In her miscellaneous poems, however, Joanna Baillie, like some other English poets, found the architectural aspect of London, or her impression of it, worth recording in verse, in a short but graphic poem, under the title " London." She comments on the comprehensive view from Hampstead, whence one sees—

“ England’s vast capital in fair expanse.”

But, like Byron, she is especially struck with the feature which Wren’s great dome makes in the scene. She sketches two aspects of the famous cathedral :—

“ St. Paul’s high dome amid her vassal bands  
Of neighbouring spires, a regal chieftain stands ;  
And over fields of ridgy roofs appear,  
With distance softly tinted, side by side,  
In kindred grace, like twain of sisters dear,  
The towers of Westminster, her abbey’s pride ;  
While far beyond the hills of Surrey shine  
Through their soft haze, and show their wavy line.”

This, to be sure, is verse, not poetry ; and Joanna had certainly not studied Gothic detail, or she would have known better than to regard the towers as the peculiar pride of Westminster Abbey ; though she is, as it were, instinctively right in suggesting that it is to distance they owe their enchantment. But she goes on in a better style :—

“ Viewed thus, a goodly sight ; but when surveyed  
Through the dense air when moistened winds prevail,  
In her grand panoply of smoke array’d,  
While clouds aloft in heavy volumes sail,  
She is sublime. She seems a curtain’d gloom  
Connecting Heaven and earth, a threatening sign of doom.

With more than natural height, rear'd in the sky,  
'Tis then St. Paul's arrests the wondering eye,  
The lower parts in swathing mist concealed,  
The higher through some half-spent shower revealed,  
So far from earth removed that well I trow,  
Did not its form man's artful structure show,  
It might some lofty Alpine peak be deem'd,  
The eagle's haunt, with cave and crevice seam'd.  
Stretch'd wide on either hand, a rugged screen,  
In lurid dimness nearer streets are seen,  
Like shoreward billows of a troubled sea  
Arrested in their rage."

The poetess, at all events, indicates that there is another side to the question of London smoke from that taken by the Smoke Abatement Society.

In the works of Scott we at first seem to have lighted on an *embarras des richesses* of architectural sketches, but the value of the collection is much impaired by the amount of repetition of very similar objects and descriptions. Scott has an eye to architectural effect in most of his poems, but he is so enamoured of the ruins of feudal architecture, that he repeats the effect rather too often; and one feels, too, that, like what Carlyle called the "buff-jerkin business" in the novels, the



architecture in the poems is interesting to Scott more because it is feudal than because it is architecture. Within these lines, however, his best architectural descriptions are very effective; so effective, in fact, that every one knows them by heart. One can hardly quote such a passage as the description of Melrose by moonlight; one might as well quote the alphabet. I do not know, however, whether all readers are equally familiar with the rider appended by Scott to a transcription of the passage, which a correspondent had begged to have in the poet's own handwriting:

“ There go, and muse with deepest awe  
On what the writer never saw,  
Who would not wander 'neath the moon,  
To see what could be seen at noon.”

With our modern notions of realism, a poet of the present day would hardly venture to make such a confession, which serves to explain, perhaps, the want of definiteness and variety of detail, already referred to, in Scott's architectural passages. In his well-known rhapsody over Edinburgh, in “Marmion,” he has how-

ever conveyed very happily in a single line the nature of the effect produced by that most romantic city :—

“ Piled deep and massy, close and high.”

For the fine effect of Edinburgh, as seen from the Calton Hill, arises from the picturesque piling up of the whole



city rather than from the architectural interest of the buildings taken separately (but you had better not say so to an Edinburgh architect). The picture of Norham Castle in the sunset glow is flashed on the reader in an effective manner :—

“ Day set on Norham’s castled steep ;  
The battled towers, the donjon keep,  
The loophole grates where captives weep  
In yellow lustre shone.”

To the modern reader this, as far as it goes, is a poetic picture ; to the builders of Norham Tower, or to Lord Marmion and his train who

rode up to it, the aspect was no more "poetic" than that of a modern railway viaduct is to a modern engineer; it was a piece of military engineering and nothing more. So much are we the slaves of time and old association in these matters. There is a longer passage in "Marmion" that is less familiar, and is worth quoting because it shows more attention to detail and more observation of actual facts of design and structure and texture than is usual with Scott in passages of this kind; I mean the description of the buildings on Holy Isle, where the hapless Constance was immured:—

“The castle with its battled walls,  
The ancient monastery's halls;  
A solemn, huge, and dark red pile  
Placed on the margin of the isle.  
In Saxon \* strength that abbey frowned,  
With massive arches broad and round  
That rose alternate, row on row,  
On ponderous columns, short and low,  
Built ere the art was known  
By pointed aisle and shafted stalk  
The arcades of an alley'd walk  
To emulate in stone.  
On the deep walls the heathen Dane  
Had pour'd his impious rage in vain.

---

\* He should, of course, have said "Norman."

\* \* \* \*

Not but that portions of the pile,  
Rebuilt in a later style,  
Show'd where the spoiler's hand had been ;  
Not but the wasting sea breeze keen  
Had worn the pillars' carving quaint,  
And *moulded* in his niche the saint,  
And rounded with consuming power  
The pointed angles of each tower ;  
Yet still entire the abbey stood,  
Like veteran worn, but unsubdued."

The idea of the later Gothic imitating " the arcades of an alley'd walk " is of course entirely fallacious, but it was the fanciful notion of Scott's time, and must be excused on that account ; but the first portion of the passage shows more perception of differences of style than we generally find in poetry of that date, and the latter part is a forcible description of the effect of time on builded walls, and we should notice especially the admirable epithet " moulded " to express the rounding away of the contours of a sculptured figure by the action of weather—an expression which seems almost to indicate an intuitive perception of the quality implied in moulded work, as opposed to the sharp and defined effect of carved work.

In describing landscape, Scott generally has an eye to the architectural incidents of the scene; as in the "Lady of the Lake" for instance :—

"On this bold brow a lordly tower,  
In that soft vale a lady's bower,  
On yonder meadow far away  
The turrets of a cloister grey."

Each class of building here is suited to its site, with a recognition of the relation between architecture and landscape. So again in the "Last Minstrel" :—

"High over Borthwick's mountain flood  
His wood-embosom'd mansion stood."

And in "Rokeby" :—

"And as I rode by Dalton Hall,  
Beneath the turrets high"—

He places his castle just as a landscape painter might; not obtrusively, nor calling attention to its details, but as a picturesque incident blending with the whole scene, and giving a touch of human interest to it.

From Scott to Shelley is a progress from practicable human architecture to castles in the

air. Of architecture in the ordinary sense Shelley knew, and probably cared, little or nothing. Even where he does introduce references to earthly architecture in his poems, it is rather as a part of nature, as a portion of the scenery, than as architecture considered in a separate sense. He blends and fuses it with the whole scene in a manner very Turneresque. Indeed, the description of Venice in the "Lines written among the Euganean Hills," reminds one of nothing so much as of one of Turner's later Italian pictures, with its indistinct shimmer of light and colour, of buildings and their reflections, all blended together :—

“ Underneath day's azure eyes,  
Ocean's nursling, Venice, lies,  
A peopled labyrinth of walls,  
Amphitrite's destined halls,  
Which her hoary sire now paves  
With his blue and beaming waves.  
Lo ! the sun upsprings behind,  
Broad, red, radiant, half reclined  
On the level, quivering line  
Of the water's crystalline ;  
And before that dream of light,  
As within a furnace bright,  
Column, tower, and dome, and spire  
Shine like obelisks of fire,

Panting with inconstant motion  
From the altar of dark ocean  
To the sapphire-tinted skies."

What is most remarkable in this description is the suggestion of quivering movement in the whole scene—movement derived from the water, but seeming to affect the buildings rising above it, as, to the eye, it really seems often to affect them. In contrast to this may be taken Rogers's one good architectural touch in his "Italy," the three lines about Venice that have been so often quoted:—



"The sea is in the broad, the narrow streets,  
Ebbing and flowing, and the salt seaweed  
Clings to the marble of her palaces."

This is prosaic, in a sense, in comparison with Shelley's glowing picture, but it is redeemed from commonplace by the characteristic incident of the seaweed clinging to

the marble—a bit of realistic detail which remains in the memory. The combination of buildings with water seems to have had a peculiar attraction for Shelley's eye; and, indeed, there is no position in which a fine piece of architecture looks so fine as on the margin of an expanse of water, which both forms an extended base-line to it and aids its pictorial effect by reflection. We come across this again in "The Witch of Atlas":—

"And where within the surface of the river  
The shadows\* of the massy temples lie  
And never are erased, but tremble ever  
Like things which every cloud can doom to die;  
Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever  
The works of man pierced that serenest sky  
With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 'twas her delight  
To wander in the shadows of the night."

A curious passage in the "Ode to the West Wind," where, again, the combination of water and buildings comes in, appears to represent the buildings as actually seen (in dream) under the water:—

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\* An inaccurate use of "shadows" for "reflections," unfortunately not uncommon with poets. It is the worse in this case because he uses the word "shadows" in another sense in the same stanza.



“And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
Quivering within the wave’s intenser day.”

The passage refers to the Mediterranean, and it is difficult to say whether it means the reflection of buildings in the water, or whether Shelley was imagining the existence of submerged cities. In the latter case his idea was the same as that of Moore—

“On Lough Neagh’s bank as the fisherman strays,  
When the clear, cold eve’s declining,  
He sees the round towers of other days  
In the wave beneath him shining”—

though Moore’s lines are vague and quiescent indeed in comparison with the vivid imagery of Shelley—“intenser,” like the light in the water. But Shelley always combines his architecture, or architectural remains, with the whole feeling of the scene; they are not dwelt on so much for their own sake as for the sake of the added picturesque associations which they afford; as, again, in the “Revolt of Islam”—

“Around me broken tombs and columns riven  
Look’d vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale  
Waked in those ruins grey its everlasting wail,”

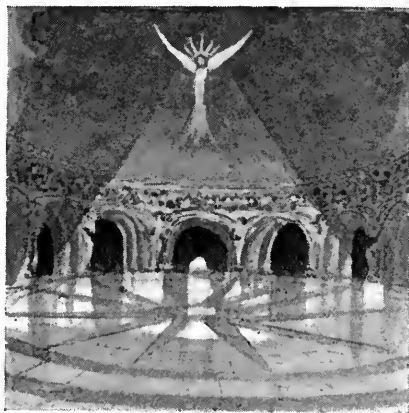
or else the interest of the architectural remains is connected with history, as in "Alastor":—

" His wandering step,  
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited  
The awful ruins of the realms of old ;  
Athens and Tyre and Balbec, and the waste  
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers  
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,  
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange,  
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,  
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphinx,  
Dark Ethiopia in her desert wilds  
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,  
Stupendous columns, and wild images  
Of more than man, where marble demons watch  
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men  
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,  
He linger'd, poring on memorials  
Of the world's youth."

Shelley, however, was also one of the few poets who have tried creating an ideal architecture out of their own brain ; and he does it, at all events, better than Pope. The description of Queen Mab's palace is perhaps hardly to be classed even as ideal architecture ; it is a vague compound of spheres and spaces, with no constructive features ; it is worth quoting as a glowing bit of " faërie," however :

“ —Likest evening’s vault that fairy hall ;  
A heaven low resting on the wave, it spread  
    Its floors of flashing light,  
    Its vast and azure dome,  
And, on the verge of that obscure abyss  
Where crystal battlements o’erhang the gulf  
Of the dark world, ten thousand spheres diffuse  
Their lustre through its adamantine gates.”

This, however, suggests no distinct idea to the mind’s eye ; it would be impossible to paint a picture of it. But the temple in the “ Revolt of Islam,” purely ideal and impossible as it is, has nevertheless a certain architectural character, and is at least gorgeously conceived :—



“ We disembarked, and through a portal wide  
    We passed, whose roof, of moonstone carved, did keep  
A glimmering o’er the forms on either side,  
Sculptures like life and thought, immovable, deep-eyed.  
We came to a vast hall whose glorious roof  
    Was diamond which had drunk the lightning’s sheen  
In darkness, and now pour’d it through the woof

Of spell-inwoven clouds hung there to screen  
 Its blinding splendour. Through such veil was seen  
 That work of subtler power, divine and rare,  
 Orb above orb, with starry shapes between,  
 And hornèd moons, and meteors strange and fair  
 On night-black columns poised—one hollow hemisphere.  
 Ten thousand columns, in that quivering light  
 Distinct—between those shafts wound far away,  
 The long and labyrinthine aisles, more bright  
 With their own radiance than the heaven of day,  
 And on the jasper walls around there lay  
 Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought,  
 Which did the spirit's history display,  
 A tale of passionate change, divinely taught,  
 Which in their winged dance unconscious genii wrought."

It would perhaps be worth while for some  
 "conscious genius" to try a realisation of  
 this dream on canvas. The description of  
 the dome in the second stanza, with its  
 "hornèd moons" and "meteors," resembles  
 an incident in Tennyson's description of the  
 interior of the "Palace of Art," and may even  
 have suggested it—how the mystic inhabitant  
 of that mystic palace—

"——Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
 And pure quintessences of precious oils  
 In hollowed moons of gems  
 To mimic heaven."

With Byron, as with Scott, one may say

that his best passages bearing on our subject are so familiar that it is superfluous to quote them. The description of Newstead Abbey, in "Don Juan," is known to everyone as one of the most highly wrought poetical rhapsodies ever suggested by the contemplation of the ruins of mediæval architecture; even Scott's famous Melrose passage is cold by comparison; and the stanzas suggested by the Colosseum, in "Childe Harold," are even more widely known, though it has not been so generally noticed that he repeated the Colosseum reflections, in a somewhat similar strain but in weaker language, in the last act of "Manfred." Other passages of his in regard to Rome and her relics have passed into almost proverbial use; even that most dull and prosaic of Roman antiquaries, Mr. Parker, thought it worth while to note, in reference to the column in the Forum, that "Byron calls it 'the nameless column'"; as if Byron had entered it under that title in a catalogue!

"Tully was not so eloquent as thou,  
Thou nameless column with the buried base."

But with all Byron's eloquence and poetic

fervour in such passages, it is obvious that his interest in the remains of ancient architecture was purely that of its association with a great past. No great poet (and such Byron undoubtedly was, though the present generation will not have it so) was ever so ignorant of and indifferent to art for art's sake, and his want both of historical knowledge and critical judgment on the subject is evident in various passages in "*Childe Harold*." His reflection in regard to the interior effect of St. Peter's :—

"Enter ! Its grandeur overpowers thee not,  
And why ? It is not lessen'd, but thy mind,  
Expanded by the genius of the spot,  
Has grown colossal"—

is only an inverted form of the often-repeated jargon about St. Peter's looking small "because it is so well-proportioned"; that it did not look, internally, as large as it should, Byron felt, but gave a fanciful reason for the impression instead of the real and more simple one, viz. : that the details are all out of scale, which he would never have perceived, and the suggestion of which he would probably have resented as an impertinence. Again, in reference to the

Mausoleum (the Castle of St. Angelo), then called "the Mole of Hadrian," he is quite at sea in his architectural genealogies when he speaks of Hadrian as :—

"Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,  
Colossal copyist of deformity,  
Whose travelled phantasy from the far Nile's  
Enormous model, doom'd the artist's toils  
To build for giants, and for his vain earth  
His shrunken ashes, raise this dome."

It is difficult to understand how anyone could ever have connected the Mausoleum, even as it stands, with the idea of the Egyptian pyramid as a model, or imagined that the building in its pristine state could ever have deserved to be called a "copy of deformity"; but Byron had no eye to read the reality of an architectural design from its defaced remains, or reconstruct it in his imagination. But if he has treated actual architecture with rather more zeal than knowledge in his poetry, it must be said, on the other hand, that he is one of the few poets who have thought it worth while to draw upon architecture for similes to

heighten the poetic expression of his thought ; and he has paid her this compliment in two of the finest passages in his poems. The one is in the famous passage where he muses, like Hamlet, over a skull :—

“ Look on its broken arch, its ruin’d wall,  
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul ;  
Yes, this was once ambition’s airy hall,  
The dome of thought, the palace of the soul.”

The lines have been so familiarised by quotation that people hardly remark on the imagery employed, and the fact that it is all drawn from architecture. The same use is made of architectural images in describing the Alps :—

“ The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls  
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,  
And throned eternity in icy halls  
Of cold sublimity.”

To use architectural imagery to illustrate two such subjects, indicates certainly a tacit conviction of the essential grandeur of the art. Whether Byron thought so much of architects as of architecture may be doubted. He has



told us plainly that while loving sculpture (antique at least) he hated the sculptor; probably some member of the craft had bored him with sculptural shop:—

“The paltry jargon of the marble mart;”

and a lively verse in “Don Juan” metes out as hard measure to the architect who wanted to rebuild Sir Henry Amundeville’s “place”:—

“There was a modern Goth, I mean a Gothic  
Bricklayer of Babel, called an architect,  
Brought to survey these grey walls, which, though so thick,  
Might have from time acquired some slight defect,  
Who after rummaging the abbey through thick  
And thin, produced a plan whereby to erect  
New buildings of correctest conformation,  
And throw down old, which he called ‘restoration.’”

Probably this also was a personal reminiscence of someone who had wanted to restore Newstead. It cannot be denied that in this satiric fling at “restoration” he was in advance of his day, and might have furnished a motto for what is irreverently called the “Anti-Scrape Society.”

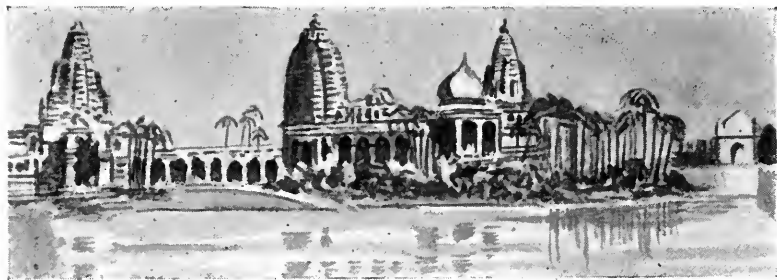
Keats, in his few touches on architecture,

is pretty much in the same tune as Shelley; he builds ideal dream-castles, as in "Hyperion":—

"His palace bright,  
Bastioned with pyramids of glowing gold,  
And touched with shade of bronzed obelisks,  
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts,  
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries."

There is a fine touch, half historic, in regard to the musings of the nymph Asia:—

"More thought than woe was in her dusky face,  
For she was prophesying of her glory,



And in her wide imagination stood  
Palm-shaded temples and high rival fanes  
By Oxus or on Ganges' sacred isles."

But of all suggestions of visionary architecture in poetry there is perhaps nothing so ethereal as that in "Lamia," of the witch's mansion supported on sound alone:—

"A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone  
Supportress of the fairy roof."

One is reminded of Tennyson's

"As yonder walls  
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
A cloud that gathered shape."

But here the music is only the cause which sets in motion the magic power that causes the walls of Troy to rise; once risen, they stand independently; in "Lamia" the music is actually the scaffolding of the structure—it will collapse when the sound ceases; one of the most strange and weird fancies in English poetry. One vividly picturesque passage in regard to the actual detail of Gothic architecture ends the list of Keats's architectural references:—

"The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,  
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,  
With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on their  
breasts."

Wordsworth, the opposite of Keats in so many respects, builds no ideal palaces, but he draws, in one of the "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," a fine spiritual symbolism from the material

forms of the mediæval building, in which he sees—

“Diffused in every part  
Spirit divine through forms of human art ;  
Faith had her arch—her arch when winds blew loud,  
Into the consciousness of safety thrilled ;  
And Love her towers of dread foundation, laid  
Under the grave of things ; Hope had her spire  
Star-high, and pointing still to something higher.”

The last line and a-half has been often quoted, and illustrates possibly the feeling of those who designed the church spires, certainly that which they have suggested to many a beholder; and the whole passage is a fine example of what may be called intellectual symbolism, based upon the association of ideas, as opposed to the merely material or ecclesiological symbolism, which arbitrarily selects a certain detail to signify a certain idea with which it has no natural or intellectual association.\* Speaking of church

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\* Ex. gr., the *vesica piscis* as the symbol of Christ, or the oblique setting out of the chancel on plan to represent the inclination of Christ's head on the cross. It is not certain that this is the motive for the obliquity of the chancel walls in a good many mediæval churches, but it is the most probable

towers, one may remember that Mrs. Browning derived a different and more mundane suggestion from the Campanile at Florence ("Casa Guidi Windows") :—

" Here where Giotto placed  
His campanile,\* like an unperplex'd  
Fine question Heavenward——"

the "question" being asked on behalf of Florence—What high place might not the city take whose artist had done this?

Wordsworth's most highly elaborated and deliberate architectural passage is to be found in the well-known three sonnets on King's Chapel, which it is almost superfluous to quote; the salient expressions in them have become household words. His epithet "self-poised," in regard to the vault, recalls Congreve's expression before noticed, "By its own weight made steadfast"; both poets, without exactly

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reason; and, if the true one, is a curious example of the childishness, in some respects, of the mediæval mind. In the words of Bacon, "These be but toys."

\* Whether, in fact, Giotto had anything to do with the campanile is now at least a *vexata quæstio*, if it has not indeed passed beyond that stage.

understanding the construction, recognised that the mediæval vault was a matter of balance of thrusts. Less familiar, and pitched in a lower key, is Wordsworth's nevertheless very interesting and sympathetic picture (in "The Excursion") of the interior of the country parish church, as it was to be found in his day, in what may be called the pre-Restoration period, with its curious assemblage of well-meant but incongruous monuments and furniture :—

"As chanced, the portals of the sacred pile  
Stood open, and we entered. On my frame,  
At such transition from the fervid air,  
A grateful coolness fell, that served to strike  
The heart, in concert with the temperate awe  
And natural reverence that the place inspired.  
Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,  
But large and massy, for duration built ;  
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld  
By naked rafters intricately cross'd  
Like leafless underboughs, 'mid some thick grove,  
All wither'd by the depth of shade above.  
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,  
Each in its ornamental scroll inclosed,  
Each also crown'd with wingèd heads—a pair  
Of rudely painted cherubim. The floor  
Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,

Was occupied by oaken benches, ranged  
In seemly rows ; the chancel only showed  
Some inoffensive marks of earthly state  
And vain distinction. A capacious pew  
Of sculptured oak stood there, with drapery lined ;  
And marble monuments were here display'd  
Thronging the walls ; and on the floor beneath  
Sepulchral stones appeared, with emblems graven,  
And footworn epitaphs, and some with small  
And shining effigies of brass inlaid."

Many of the older among us will recall in this description, with some variations of detail, the country church of their childhood, the memory of which is thus enshrined in a poem which, in spite of Jeffreys's "This will never do!" and though it can never be popular, will always keep its place in English literature, and "fit audience find though few." The column of Trajan, with its sculptures—

"Group winding after group with dreamlike ease——"

form the subject of a pleasing and thoughtful little poem among Wordsworth's later works, winding up with a fine thought on the permanent interest of a work of art ; the empire of Rome is "ancient history"—

“ Her very speech is dead ;  
Yet glorious art the sweep of time defies,  
And Trajan still, through various enterprise,  
Mounts, in this fine illusion, toward the skies.”

In a sonnet written at Bruges, he touches very happily upon the harmonising influence of old architecture and artistic treasures on the life and manners of a city :—

“ The spirit of antiquity—enshrined  
In sumptuous buildings, vocal in sweet song,  
In picture speaking with heroic tongue,  
And with devout solemnities entwined—  
Strikes to the seat of grace within the mind :  
Hence forms that glide with swan-like ease along,  
Hence motions, even amid the vulgar throng,  
To an harmonious decency confined,  
As if the streets were consecrated ground,  
The city one vast temple—dedicate  
To mutual respect in thought and deed.”

One cannot help suspecting, however, that this effect of the architecture on the manners of the city resided a good deal in the poet's imagination, and that the good people of Bruges would have been surprised to hear of it, though they may, no doubt, have been unconsciously influenced by their surroundings to some extent ; one would expect to find the



population of a city with a past, and with ancient monuments, different in some ways from that of an entirely new city; but Wordsworth, with that entire deficiency in the sense of humour which is his main defect as a poet, has pushed it a little too far.\*

In his more passing references to architecture, Wordsworth, like Scott, has an eye for the effect of buildings as incidents in a landscape:—

“Where Rylstone’s old sequester’d hall  
A venerable image yields  
Of quiet to the neighbouring fields.

“A castle like a stately crown  
On the steep banks of winding Tees”;

and he even (like Byron) transforms landscapes into architectural imagery, as in the

---

\* So far as this influence of architectural surroundings on character and manner does exist, it is probably a phenomenon of modern life only. When one thinks of the murder of Beckett, with every circumstance of insult and savagery, in the “glorious choir” of his own cathedral, then nearly new, or of the massacre of the Abencerrages in one of the rooms of the Alhambra, one can hardly think that architecture in its ancient (and greater) days had much of the influence of *nec sinit esse feros*. It is we, and not the generations who built them, whose feelings are impressed and refined by the influence of ancient buildings.

“ Descriptive Sketches,” the record of a town in Switzerland :—

“ In solemn shapes before the admiring eye  
Dilated hung the misty pines on high,  
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and towers,  
And antique castles seen through drizzling showers.”

Among more continuously worked-out architectural poems may be named the sonnet “ Composed among the ruins of a Castle in North Wales ” ; the poem on Sir G. Beaumont’s picture of “ Peele Castle in a Storm ” (the poem is probably a great deal better than the picture), and the description, in “ The Excursion,” of the wonderful castle-building of the clouds after a storm ; evidently a record, from observation, of one of those transcendent effects of Nature which one sees once or twice perhaps, in a lifetime : the narrator was walking through mist on a hillside :—

“ When a step,  
A single step that freed me from the skirts  
Of the blind vapour, open’d to my view  
Glory beyond all glory ever seen  
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul !  
The appearance instantaneously disclosed  
Was of a mighty city—boldly say  
A wilderness of building, sinking far

And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,  
Far sinking into splendour, without end !  
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,  
With alabaster domes and silver spires,  
And blazing terrace upon terrace high  
Uplifted ; here, serene pavilions bright  
In avenues disposed ; there, towers begirt  
With battlements that on their restless fronts  
Bore stars,—illumination of all gems.  
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought  
Upon the dark materials of the storm  
Now pacified ; on them, and on the coves  
And mountain steeps and summits, whereunto  
The vapours had receded, taking then  
Their station under a cerulean sky.  
Oh ! 'twas an unimaginable sight !  
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks, and emerald turf,  
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,  
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,  
Molten together, and composing thus,  
Each lost in each, that marvellous array  
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge  
Fantastic pomp of structure without name."

No one, as far as I know, has ever attempted to paint this cloud-vision of "The Excursion" ; perhaps it could only be attempted by a painter who had himself seen such an effect. To come down to earth again, one more architectural touch of Wordsworth's may be mentioned, where he has summed up the

effect of the High Street at Oxford in the one line—

“ The stream-like windings of that glorious street,”

which may possibly last longer than the street itself.

It is interesting to observe how strongly Longfellow—a poet of a country which has no architectural past—is drawn to the contemplation of the mediæval monuments of Europe. Of Classic architecture he has nothing to say; his whole heart is in the Middle Ages, and the German Middle Ages above all. The one reference to architecture on American soil is the short sketch, in “Tales of a Wayside Inn,” of the typical New England house :—

“ Built in the old Colonial day,  
When men lived in a grander way,  
With ampler hospitality ;  
A kind of old Hobgoblin Hall,  
Now somewhat fallen to decay,  
With weather-stains upon the wall,  
And stairways worn, and crazy doors,  
And creaking and uneasy floors,  
And chimneys huge, and tiled, and tall.”

In reality the “ Old Colonial ” house was in its

main character the Jacobean or Queen Anne house rebuilt across the seas, but by comparison with the ultra-modernism of the States architecture it assumes, to the eye of the States poet, an aspect of venerable antiquity and picturesqueness. Otherwise, his architectural descriptions are all of mediæval work, and he had imbibed a good deal of the mediæval spirit, as we see in the reply to the question of the heroine in the "Golden Legend," as to who built the Cathedral of Strasburg :—

" A great master of his craft,  
Erwin von Steinbach ; but not he alone,  
For many generations labour'd with him.  
Children that came to see these saints in stone,  
As day by day out of the blocks they rose,  
Grew old and died, and still the work went on,  
And on, and on, and is not yet completed.  
\*       \*       \*       The architect  
Built his great heart into these sculptured stones,\*  
And with him toiled his children, and their lives  
Were builded with his own into the walls  
As offerings to God."

---

\* Unfortunately, he built something else into them, viz. a quantity of iron ties and bands, with which the work is held together ; a fact which detracts from our estimate of its monumental value.

In another scene we have a sketch of the cathedral by moonlight :—

“ Lo, with what depth of blackness thrown  
Against the clouds, far up the skies,  
The walls of the cathedral rise  
Like a mysterious grove of stone,  
With fitful lights and shadows blending,  
As from behind the moon ascending,  
Lights its dim aisles and paths unknown !



The wind is rising, but the boughs  
Rise not and fall not with the wind  
That through their foliage sobs and soughs ;  
Only the cloudy rack behind  
Drifting onward, wild and ragged,  
Gives to each spire and buttress jagged  
A seeming motion undefined——”

like the seeming motion imparted to the

Venetian structures by the water, in Shelley's lines before quoted. Longfellow has happily fixed too, in one picturesque line, the impression produced by the Pyx finial at Nuremberg ;

“ Like the foamy sheaf of fountains rising through the  
painted air.”

His sympathy with architecture is evinced, too, in his tendency to draw illustrations and similes from it ; one of the more prominent instances is his comparison of Dante's great poem to a cathedral :—

“ How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers !  
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves  
Birds build their nests ; while canopied with leaves  
Parvis and portal bloom like trelliss'd bowers,  
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers !  
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves  
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,  
And, underneath, the hated Judas lowers.”

In the poem on Nuremberg he happily characterises the homely Meistersinger poets as—

“ Building nests in Fame's great temple, as in spouts the  
swallows build ;”

and he devotes one short poem, “ The Builders,” entirely to an allegory representing life as a building. The moral of the

poem is excellent, but, to say truth, its literary expression hardly rises into poetry.

The fascination which mediæval architecture, with its wealth of picturesque incident, exercises over the poetic temperament has seldom been better illustrated than in the beautiful and highly elaborated picture of the interior of a great cathedral given in what is perhaps the best of Adelaide Procter's poems, "A Tomb in Ghent":—

" Dim with dark shadows of the ages past  
St. Bavon stands, solemn, and rich, and vast ;  
The slender pillars, in long vistas spread,  
Like forest arches meet and close o'erhead,\*  
So high, that, like a weak and doubting prayer,  
Ere it can float to the carved angels there,  
The silver-clouded incense faints in air.

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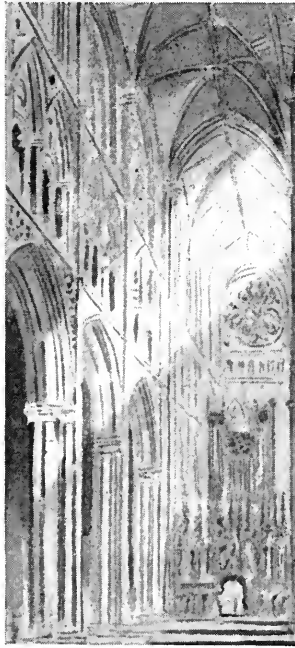
\* This association between trees and Gothic vaulting seems ineradicable in the literary mind. Lord Houghton has it again in one of his poems, "Corfu," describing the trees—

" Making, with their thick-boss'd and furrow'd trunks,  
Bases far spread and branches serpentine,  
Sylvan cathedrals, such as in old time  
Gave the first life to Gothic art, and led  
Imagination so sublime a way," &c.

Pretty, but totally untrue. An acquaintance with the history of the development of the Gothic vault would soon put all these non-constructional fancies to flight.



\* \* \* \* \*  
Then he would watch the rosy sunlight glow  
That crept along the marble floor below,



Passing, as life does, with the passing hours,\*  
Now by a shrine all rich with gems and flowers,

---

\* Compare Longfellow ("Golden Legend")—

“Upward steals the life of man  
As the sunshine from the wall ;  
From the wall into the sky,  
From the roof along the spire ;  
Ah ! the souls of those that die  
Are but shadows lifted higher.”

Now on the brazen letters of a tomb,  
Then leaving it again to shade and gloom,  
And creeping on to show, distinct and quaint,  
The kneeling figure of some marble saint ;  
Or lighting up the carvings strange and rare,  
That told of patient toil and reverent care ;  
Ivy that trembled on the spray, and ears  
Of heavy corn, and slender bulrush spears ;  
And all the thousand tangled weeds that grow  
In summer where the silver rivers flow ;  
And demon heads grotesque, that seem'd to glare  
In impotent wrath at all the beauty there.  
Then the gold rays up pillared shaft would climb,  
And so be drawn to heaven at evening time.  
And deeper silence, darker shadows flow'd  
On all around, only the windows glow'd  
With blazon'd glory, like the shield of light  
Archangels bear, who armed with love and might,  
Watch upon heavens battlements at night.  
Then all was shade ; the silver lamps that gleam'd,  
Lost in the daylight, in the darkness seemed  
Like sparks of fire in the dim aisles to shine,  
Or trembling stars before each separate shrine.  
Grown half afraid, the child would leave them there,  
And come forth, blinded by the noisy glare  
That burst upon him from the busy square."

The minuteness of this description, the amount of detail crowded into it, is characteristic of the modern interest in mediæval art, and is a curious contrast to the mere generalisations of the earlier poets. The closing lines of the

quotation remind one of the forcible though simple expression of the same contrast between the glare and noise outside the cathedral and the repose within, in the prelude to Kingsley's "Saints' Tragedy"—

" All within is vast and tall,  
All without is mean and small ;  
All without is harsh and shrill,  
All within is hushed and still."

This reposeful effect of the great church interior, amid the din and bustle of the city, has probably appealed to the more sympathetic and melancholy temperaments among all generations of men who built great temples—at all events since the Christian era, and one can imagine how the feeling may have been intensified in the Middle Ages by the ardour of asceticism on one side and the violent and brutal character of the outside life on the other side. Whether any such feeling existed in the Pagan mind may be doubtful ; but we find traces of it in the Old Testament. "Hide me in thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues" is an ancient expression of the same feeling which prompted

the whole passage from Adelaide Procter's poem.

Few are the English poets of the modern era who have touched classic architecture. Among them is he

"Whom mortals call Lord Houghton, but the angels Monckton Milnes,"

a man with more of the making of a great poet in him than either he himself or his friends ever fully realised, and who, in a poem under the title "The Flowers of Helicon," speaks in very striking language of the vitalising influence of Greek art:—

"For from those generous calices  
The vegetative virtue shed  
Flew over distant lands and seas  
Waking wide nations from the dead ;  
And e'er the parent plants o'erthrown  
Gave place to rank and noisome weed,  
The giant Roman world was sown  
Throughout with the ennobling seed.

"And downward thence to latest days  
The heritage of beauty fell,  
And Grecian forms and Grecian lays  
Prolonged their humanising spell,

Till, when new worlds for man to win  
The Atlantic's riven waves disclose,  
The wildernesses there begin  
To blossom with the Grecian rose."

That is exquisitely put; and as far as architecture in the States is concerned, Milnes was more prophetic than he knew of. The first blossoming of the Grecian rose on that soil was not much to boast of, considering that the Capitol at Washington was its best product; but in the present day some of the most gifted American architects are giving their best efforts to the evolution of detail and treatment entirely founded on Greek work. There is another fine passage in Milnes's poems on the illumination of St. Peter's :—

"Temple, where time has wed eternity"—

where, after describing the effect of seeing the well-known lines of the great cathedral traced out only in this "mellow jewelry" of lights, he concludes—

"But yet how sweet the hardly waking sense,  
That when the strength of hours has quenched those gems,

Disparted all those soft-bright diadems,  
Still in the Sun thy form will rise supreme  
In its own solid clear magnificence,  
Divinest substance then, as now divinest dream."

Matthew Arnold, classic as he is in his style and his modes of thought—a Hellenist of the Hellenists—has, singularly enough, devoted his only elaborate architectural description to a mediæval building, "The Church of Brou,"\* of which there is, in the poem so named, an interior description which is very fine, and which it is interesting to compare with Adelaide Procter's description of the interior of St. Bavon, the rather because Arnold's picture is taken from a peculiar point of view, being an imagination of the appearance the church would present to the effigies of the dead reposing in it, could they wake to momentary consciousness on the monument where they are sculptured:—

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\* Still more curious is it that, as far as one can conclude from the poem, Arnold had never seen the actual church of Brou, as the impression given in the poem is quite inaccurate, and the "princely pair" do *not* rest together on one monument. The fact seems to be that Arnold was taken with the story, and evolved the church out of his own imagination.

“So sleep, for ever sleep, O marble pair ;  
Or, if ye wake, let it be then when fair  
On the carved western front a flood of light  
Streams from the setting sun, and colours bright  
Prophets, transparent saints, and martyrs brave  
In the vast western window of the nave ;  
And on the pavement round the tomb there glints  
A chequer work of glowing sapphire tints,  
And amethyst and ruby ; then unclose  
Your eyelids, on the stone where ye repose,  
And from your brodered pillows lift your heads,  
And rise upon your cold white marble beds ;  
And looking down on the warm rosy tints  
That chequer, at your feet, the illumined flints ;  
Say, ‘What is this? We are in bliss—forgiven ;  
Behold the pavement of the courts of heaven.’”

Or, if they should rather wake at night in the  
moonlit interior—

“Then gazing up through the dim pillars high,  
The foliaged marble forest where ye lie,  
‘Hush,’ ye will say, ‘it is eternity.  
This is the glimmering verge of heaven, and these  
The columns of the heavenly palaces.’”

The whole passage is one of the strangest and  
most solemn “phantasies” in modern poetry,  
and quite out of the usual turn of Arnold’s  
thought and style ; the story seems to have  
laid hold of his fancy, and carried him out of  
himself, and away from his usual haunts. In

his beautiful little bit of antique, "The Strayed Reveller," he just hints at pictures that remind us of Mr. Tadema; the figure of Circe in her white robe in the portico, and the distant view of the temple glittering in the sun—

"Iacchus' white fane  
On yonder hill."

One could have wished that a poet so remarkably Greek in his prevailing sympathies and tone of mind had touched more often on Greek art and architecture than he did; he could hardly have done so without throwing some new lights on it. In "Stanzas written at Carnac" he brings into effective contrast the Druidic and Christian monuments, seen together :—

"Behind me, on their grassy sweep,  
Bearded with lichen, scrawl'd and grey,  
The giant stones of Carnac sleep  
In the mild evening of the May.

"No priestly stern procession now  
Streams through their rows of pillars old;  
No victims bleed, no Druids bow;  
Sheep make the furze-grown aisles their fold.



“And o’er the glistening lovely land  
Rise up all round the Christian spires ;  
The church of Carnac, by the strand,  
Catches the westering sun’s last fires.”

Arnold sees here the Druid stones and the mediæval spire as contrasting objects. Browning, in a remarkable passage in “*Fifine at the Fair*” (too long to quote), compares the Druidic remains at Pornic with the church spire, in quite an opposite sense, emphasising not the difference, but the resemblance, of the two objects and their common origin ; for the Curé, he says, had ordered the overthrow of the Druid obelisk, because its original signification was still too prominent in the superstitions of the country-folk :—

“And there, accordingly, in bush and briar it—‘bides  
Its time to rise again’ (so somebody derides,  
That’s pert from Paris) ‘since yon spire you keep erect  
Yonder, and pray beneath, is nothing, I suspect,  
But just the symbol’s self, expressed in slate for rock,  
Art’s smooth for nature’s rough, new chip from the old  
block !”

Each poet was right in his own sense, Browning historically, Arnold in sentiment ; and in such points one may say, “the greatest

of these is sentiment," at least for a poet; an anthropologist may think otherwise, no doubt. And when one recalls Wordsworth's noble line about the symbolism of the church spire, quoted a few pages back, one is inclined rather to resent Browning's cynical reference to the *origines* of symbolism, and to think that a poet might have been better employed.

It is curious that Matthew Arnold's friend Clough, who, as a poet, was quite of the opposite school to Arnold, a Hebraist rather than a Hellenist, a moraliser more than a poet (Mr. Swinburne, rather unjustly I think, denies that he was a poet at all), shows, nevertheless, a great interest in Roman and Renaissance architecture, and, in fact, in a passage in "Dipsychus," which the present writer has drawn attention to elsewhere,\* has decisively expressed his conviction that the modern mind has been too much influenced by "the classic mind of Greece and Rome" ever to dispense with the main features of classic architecture in its buildings:—

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\* "Architecture for General Readers," p. 82.

“In all new work that would look forth  
To more than antiquarian worth,  
Palladio's pediments and bases,  
*Or something such*, will find their places.”

And the most recent turn of thought or fashion (which you will) in architectural design seems for the present at least to confirm Clough's position. The important point, however, is that Clough realised the fact that we can never escape from the influence on our minds of the revival of learning, so as to pursue architecture in the spontaneous manner, uninfluenced by tradition, in which it was pursued in the Middle Ages; we have eaten of the tree of knowledge, and our art, among other things, must feel the consequences; men of specially literary culture, as poets usually are or should be, probably perceive this more clearly than most of the architects do. But the most important and interesting of Clough's architectural passages are the reflections on the monuments of Rome, embodied in the “*Amours de Voyage*,” and which, in fact, are the best things written about Rome by any poet since Byron; but with a difference indeed! For, while Byron regards the ancient buildings

purely in the light of poetic association with the past, has no eye to their style or detail or artistic school, sees them only as relics of Roman greatness; Clough's sceptical and critical mind weighs them in the balance as it were, considers what they really mean, artistically and historically; sets them in a new light. Disappointment with Rome was his first feeling :—

"*Rubbishy* seems the word that most exactly would suit it.

\* \* \* \*

What do I find in the Forum? An archway and two or three pillars.

Well, but St. Peter's? Alas, Bernini has filled it with sculpture. No one can cavil, I grant, at the size of the great Coliseum :\* Doubtless the notion of grand and capacious and massive amusement,

This the old Romans had ; but tell me, is this an idea ?

Yet of solidity much, but of splendour little is extant ;

'Brickwork I found thee and marble I left thee !' their emperor vaunted ;

'Marble I thought thee and brickwork I find thee !' the tourist may answer."

That is a curious tardy judgment overtaking the Romans, after so many centuries, for their

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\* Clough adopts this etymology, so it is retained, of course, in the quotation. I have always preferred the derivation suggested by "Colosseum."

veneering manner of building ; so much of the outside splendour gone, only the brick or concrete core left. Commenting, in the same poem, on St. Peter's, Clough finds that the architectural expression of the Christian faith—

" Is not here, O Rome, in any of these thy churches ;  
Is not here, but in Freiburg, or Rheims, or Westminster  
Abbey.  
What in thy dome I find, in all thy recenter efforts,  
Is a something, I think, more *rational* far, more earthly,  
Actual, less ideal, devout not in scorn or refusal,  
But in a positive, calm, Stoic-Epicurean acceptance.  
This I begin to detect in St. Peter's and some of the churches,  
Mostly in all that I see of the sixteenth-century masters,  
Overlaid, of course, with infinite gauds and gewgaws.

\* \* \* \*

No, great dome of Agrippa, thou art not Christian ! cans't  
not,  
Strip and replaster and daub and do what they will with thee,  
be so !  
Here, underneath the great porch of colossal Corinthian  
columns,  
Here as I walk do I dream of the Christian belfries above  
them ;  
Or on a bench as I sit and abide for long hours, till thy  
whole vast  
Round grows dim, as in dreams to my eyes, I repeople thy  
niches,  
Not with the Martyrs and Saints, and Confessors, and Virgins  
and Children,  
But with the mightier forms of an older, austerer worship."

His feeling is the same which induced Thorwaldsen once, when seated with some friends on a terrace overlooking Rome and facing the sunset, to raise his glass suddenly with the exhortation, "Let us drink to old Jupiter!" So, too, in "the stately Vatican chambers" Clough finds the figures of the ancient gods and Muses out of relation to the modern uses of the place, and the spectators who frequent it; where is the connecting link?

"Utter, O some one, the word that shall reconcile ancient and modern.

Am I to turn me for this unto thee, great chapel of Sixtus?"

This last hint is not a bad one, for certainly in the genius of the great decorator of the Sistine chapel there is to be found the blending of antique power with Christian feeling, more than in any other artist of the modern era. But if we can connect the Roman monuments with no special religious feeling (as the word is generally understood), they at least, thinks Clough, can lift us in one way or another above ourselves:—

"Yet to the wondrous St Peter's, and yet to the solemn  
Rotunda,

Mingling with heroes and gods, and yet to the Vatican walls,  
 Yet may we go, and recline, while a whole mighty world  
     seems above us,  
 Gathered and fix'd to all time under one roofing supreme ;  
 Yet may we, thinking on these things, exclude what is meaner  
     around us."

In Venice, too, Clough (in "Dipsychus") is better than any previous poet except Byron ; as far as poetic power goes, indeed, he comes after Byron *longo intervallo*, but he has a critical insight to which Byron made no pretence ; he recognises, for instance, the peculiar interest of the combination of Classic and Gothic elements in Venetian architecture :—

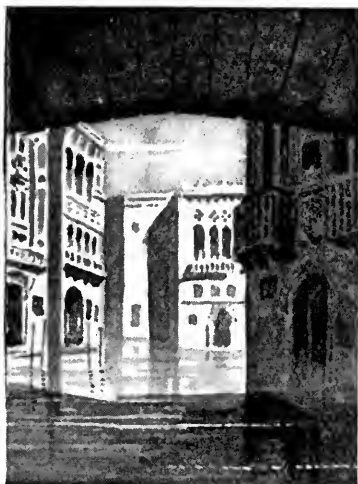
" But see a noble shelter here,  
 This grand arcade where our Venetian  
 Has formed of Gothic and of Grecian  
 A combination strange, but striking,  
 And singularly to my liking ;"

and the sketch of the effect of the canal and the buildings by moonlight is given with quite an artist's observation :—

" The south side rises o'er our bark,  
 A wall impenetrably dark,  
 The north is seen profusely bright ;  
 The water, is it shade or light ?

\* \* \* \*

In planes of sure division made  
By angles sharp of palace walls,  
The clear light and the shadow falls ;  
Oh sight of glory, sight of wonder !  
Seen, a pictorial portent, under,  
O great Rialto, the vast round  
Of thy thrice-solid arch profound."



But it is in his  
" Roman thoughts " (to borrow Cleopatra's phrase) in " Amours de Voyage " that Clough is at his best as an architectural poet ; he has felt the meaning and the associations of the monuments of Roman architecture, antique and Renaiss-

ance, as no other English poet has except Browning, and Browning has only touched on the subject, in passing, by way of metaphor or illustration, and leaves to Clough the first place as the poet of Rome.



In the works of our late great Poet Laureate we find evidence of a keen sensitiveness to beauty of colour and detail in architecture, though the references to the art in his writings are not so frequent as might have been expected from his power and pleasure in word-painting. Their tendency, however, is very marked ; they are, in spirit, the complete opposite of the cold classic taste of the eighteenth century. Tennyson is entirely of the "romantic" and mediæval school in his artistic sympathies ; and while Gray referred in a half-satirical sense to

"Rich windows that exclude the light,"

we feel that such windows would be a source of pure delight to Tennyson, and that the fact of their unpractical character in "excluding the light" would count for little or nothing with him. The whole of the gorgeous interior imagined in the "Palace of Art" is, in fact, a building to exclude the light ; and though ostensibly the poem points a moral against this, we feel that the poet enjoyed the building of this sinful aerial palace none the less. His "four courts" within the precinct, by the way, remind us a

little of Bacon's provision for the pleasaunces of his ideal mansion :— \*

“ Four courts I made, east, west, and south, and north ;  
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
A flood of fountain foam.

“ And round the cool green courts there ran a row  
Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods,  
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
Of spouted fountain floods.”

This seems like a kind of idealising of some of the Cambridge cloisters. In the interior of his palace he is conscious of that pleasure in the cool seclusion of over-arching enclosure which has always been one of the attractions of internal architectural effect to sensitive and imaginative minds :—

“ Full of long sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Through which the livelong day my soul did pass,  
Well pleased, from room to room.”

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\* In the Essay “ On Building.” Except that Bacon wrote in prose, this charming essay might be quoted as part of the architecture of the poets, for his scheme is poetical enough in conception, with the additional advantage that it could be realised ; though, it is true, only by a millionaire.

And one touch about the stained-glass windows  
is admirable—

“ Likewise the deep-set windows, stained and traced,  
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires——”

the epithet “slow-flaming” giving a kind of mysterious life to the window colouring, without disturbing the deep repose of the scene. Another magical epithet in this poem should be noticed—

“Or in a *clear-walled* city by the sea :”

an epithet which it is difficult to translate into any precise or definite meaning—it may be doubted whether Tennyson could have defined exactly what he meant by it ; but it is one of the most delightful and suggestive epithets in poetry, one of those inspirations of language which comes only to the call of a poetic genius of the first order. From amid the strange old-world scenery of the “*Idylls of the King*” there peer out picturesque bits of tottering architectural remains, imagined as the relics, in those days, of days yet older. The poet’s eye for picturesqueness of detail is shown in the

description of the half-ruined castle in which Geraint first met Enid ; a bit of effect which always reminds me of a certain etching of Albert Durer's, where a great massive war-horse is seen foreshortened, standing amid odds and ends of detail—

“ Then rode Geraint into the castle court ;  
His charger trampling many a prickly star  
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.  
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.  
Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with ferns ;  
And here had fallen a great part of a tower,  
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,  
And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers ;  
And high above a piece of turret-stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound  
Bare to the sun.”

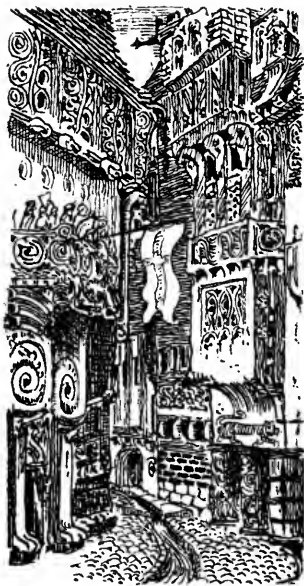
The imagined aspect of Camelot, the ancient city which had been built by heathen kings before Arthur conquered it, seems to have clung very much round the poet's fancy in his later years. In an early poem, “ The Lady of Shalott,” he refers to it merely as “ towered Camelot,” a general phrase which might apply to any large city by contrast with the country, but the wish to bring it more vividly before

the reader seems to come over him in one of the later Idylls—

“ Oh, brother, had you known our Camelot,  
Built by old kings, age after age, so old,  
The king himself had fears that it would fall ;  
So strange, so rich, and dim ; for where the roofs  
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,  
Met foreheads all along the street of those  
Who watch'd us pass ; and lower, and where the long  
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the necks  
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls.”

It is to be feared that Camelot was an insanitary city ; but it is historically evident that human beings did live, as in many parts of the East they do now live, amid picturesque heaps of building which seem as adverse to life and health, in the eyes of a modern Sanitary Inspector, as anything could well be.

Before quitting Tennyson's ideal architectural sketches, we may refer to one suggestion



of detail, not strictly architectural, but decorative work, in "The Princess," the description of the gateway, on either side of which—

"Two great statues, Art  
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves  
Of open work in which the hunter rued  
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows  
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates."

This idea of a figure of Actæon, treated in a kind of silhouette fashion, with his horns ramifying over the gateway and forming spikes at the top, might really be very effectively carried out as a wrought-iron design, and may be recommended to the consideration of artists in that material.

In Tennyson's references to actual architecture, as part of the scenery of his poems, there is not only a great deal of picturesque and vivid description, but also that degree of knowledge of the subject which a critically cultivated mind ought to have, and in which we unfortunately find some eminent poets so lamentably deficient. Such a critical knowledge adds greatly to the literary value of a

poet's reference to art ; it enables him not only to say the right thing, but to say it in the right way. This is admirably illustrated in one of Tennyson's later poems, "The Daisy," a great part of which is in fact a series of poetical reminiscences of places passed through in a run through part of Italy. In this little poem the various phases of architectural interest in the different localities are most happily and picturesquely indicated, each in a line or two, or at most a stanza of four lines—

"What Roman strength Turbìa show'd  
In ruin, by the mountain road ;  
How like a gem, beneath, the city  
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd."

Observe the effective contrast between the strong march of the first two lines, dealing with the Roman fort, and the tripping effect of the lines in which "little Monaco" is put in its place in the picture. The white towers by the blue sea formed the contrast that all painters, whether in pigments or in verse, have been taken with—

"What slender campanili grew  
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;"

Then at Florence—

“ In bright vignettes, and each complete  
Of tower or duomo, sunny sweet,  
Or palace, how the city glitter'd  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.”

But the architecture of the Lombard plains  
had no sunshine to gild it; it was all, on that  
occasion, a plague of rain—

“ Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

“ And stern and sad (so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

“ O Milan, O ! the chanting quires ;  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires ;  
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory !  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires ! ”

This is a charming example of brief but  
characteristic architectural criticism, put into  
poetic form, seizing and recording in the most  
careful phrase — “ the best words in the  
best order ”\*—the leading elements in each

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\* Coleridge's definition of poetry ; *prose* being, according to him, “ words in their best order ; ” *poetry*, “ the best words in the best order.”



town or building. In the combination of architecture with landscape there is a beautiful little sketch in "The Gardener's Daughter," in which the description of English meadow landscape gets its last touch of interest from



the presence of the cathedral city, seen in the distance over the flat country and the "slow broad stream," which—

"Creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crowned with the minster towers."

Tennyson's poems also present us with one of the not very frequent instances in which images borrowed from architecture or building are used to illustrate something in itself of deeper and higher interest. This is in the very pathetic little poem "The Deserted House," in which the body from which the

life has departed is compared, in some detail, to the house deserted by its inmates :—

“ Life and thought have gone away  
Side by side,  
Leaving doors and windows wide :  
Careless tenants they !

“ Close the doors, the shutters close,  
Or thro’ the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.”

There is a powerful piece of imagery of the same class, it may be observed, in a little-known poem by Edgar Allan Poe, in which the human body is compared to a castle ; only the contrast here is not between life and death, but between sanity and insanity. Through the windows of the castle there were once seen fairy dances (of the thoughts within) ; but the monarch, the ruler, had abdicated ; the bright inhabitants of old had left with him :—

“ And travellers now within that valley,  
Through the red-litten windows see  
Vast forms that move fantastically,  
To a discordant melody.”

As in Tennyson’s poem, the metaphor is carried out in a good deal of detail, and in a

very powerful manner. Browning, again, has used the idea of the body as the house in that remarkable epilogue to "Fifine," half-poignant and half-grotesque, where the soul contemplates the old worn-out house it is leaving—

"Every crumbling brick embrown'd with sin and shame ;"

and remembers, among the vexations of its past experience there—

"All the worry of flapping door and echoing roof."

This symbolic view of the body as the house or castle of the soul has, of course, often appeared in metaphorical and religious writing. It is only occasionally that a new force and picturesqueness is given to it by some poet of real power taking up the idea and placing it in a new light by a vivid and original manner of expression.

With the early poems of William Morris, in the volume named from "The Defence of Guenevere," we come on the first suggestions of the modern feeling for local colour and texture in ancient buildings. The description of the old castle, in "Golden Wings," sounds

a new note ; there had been nothing like it before in English poetry—

“ Many scarlet bricks there were  
In its walls, and old grey stone ;  
Over which red apples shone  
At the right time of the year.

“ On the bricks the green moss grew,  
Yellow lichen on the stone,  
Over which red apples shone ;  
Little war that castle knew.

“ Deep green water filled the moat,  
Each side had a red-brick lip  
Green and mossy with the drip  
Of dew and rain.”

That passage strikes a note which was at the time entirely new in English poetry ; the perception of the beauty of colour in mere ordinary building materials—the “red brick lip” of the moat, stained with green moss—passed without notice till Morris showed it to us ; an eighteenth or early nineteenth century poet would have given it a marble rim. Considering Morris’s interest in architecture, however, there are fewer references to it in his poems than one would have expected ; and in “Jason,” and parts of “The Earthly Paradise,”

the old-world character of the story seems to have led him back to the old Homeric style of architecture in which the precious metals predominate, as in the Palace of Æetes in the Sixth Book of "Jason":—

"The pillars, made the mighty roof to hold,  
The one was silver, and the next was gold  
All down the hall; the roof, of some strange wood  
Brought over sea, was dyed as red as blood,  
Set thick with silver flowers, and delight  
Of intertwining figures wrought aright.  
With richest webs the marble walls were hung,  
Picturing sweet stories by the poets sung  
From ancient days, so that no wall seemed there,  
But rather forests black and meadows fair,  
And streets of well-built towns, with tumbling seas  
About their marble walls and palaces."

This is entirely architecture of an imaginary golden age; it has only this modern significance, that it indicates that perception of the beauty of rich decorative detail which Morris, more than any other man, has done so much to awaken in the present generation. A still more imaginative building is the temple described in the prologue to "The Earthly Paradise," which was girdled by five circuits of peribolos walls, the first three of white

stone, the fourth half of white and half of ruddy hue, the fifth of dark red stone—

“With golden coping and wide doors of gold.”

And thence we pass into the hall—

“Where carven pillars held a gold roof up,  
And silver walls fine as a golden cup  
With figures monstrous as a dream were wrought  
And underfoot the floor beyond all thought  
Was wonderful, for like the tumbling sea  
Beset with monsters did it seem to be ;  
And in the midst a pool of ruddy gold  
Caught in its waves a glittering fountain cold,  
And through the light shower of its silver spray  
Dimly we saw the high-raised daïs, gay  
With wondrous hangings, for high up and small  
The windows were within that dream-like hall.”

This is, in fact, as the last epithet suggests, the architecture of a dream ; it is an architecture which could only be in keeping with a tale of purely legendary and prehistoric date ; and although the tales told in “The Earthly Paradise” are of this description, and will harmonise with any kind of dream architecture, the passage above quoted occurs in the preliminary portion, the account of “The Wanderers,” who were evidently of

early mediæval date, and not pre-historic, and the description makes rather too heavy a demand on our poetic faith. In the prologue to the sixth book, however, there is an architectural description of a very different kind, and to my mind far more interesting, the recollection of a native of the fens near Peterborough of seeing the great west front in actual process of building; the name of the place is not given, but the locality and the building are quite unmistakable:—

“ I, who have seen  
So many lands, and in such marvels been,  
Clearer than these abodes of outland men  
Can see above the green and unburnt fen  
The little houses of an English town,  
Cross-timbered, thatched with fen-reeds coarse and brown,  
And high o’er these three gables, great and fair,  
That slender rods of columns do upbear  
Over the minster doors, and imagery  
Of kings, and flowers no summer field doth see  
Wrought on those gables. Yea, and I heard withal  
In the fresh morning air the trowels fall  
Upon the stone, *a thin noise far away*;  
For high up wrought the masons on that day,  
Since to the monks that house seemed scarcely well  
Till they had set a spire or pinnacle  
Each side of the great porch.”

This real glimpse into the actualities of mediæval building—the small town with its little timbered houses, the three gables just risen up, and the “thin” clink of the trowels, high up on the angle towers, is worth more, to my thinking, than all the imaginary palaces over which gold and silver are so plentifully lavished.

Turning lastly to the varied pages of Browning, instinct everywhere with vivid and picturesque expression, we find among them references to architecture which are marked by a fuller combination of force of descriptive power with real knowledge of the subject than is to be found in the pages of any other English poet of any age. Like Clough, Browning is quite an art critic in his standpoint, but with a much greater power of detailed characterisation. As an example which will at once and by itself justify this opinion, take the remarkable passage in “Sordello” (Book V.) which is introduced as an amplification or illustration of the proverb that “Rome was not built in a day,” but which is really a comprehensive sketch of the history



of architecture. The passage is a sheer digression ; Browning had been referring to Sordello's futile attempt to regenerate society by reviving the Rome of ancient days ; the inevitable failure of the attempt reminds him of the proverb (as the reader can see, though no reference is made to it), and he cannot resist the temptation to illustrate it by a sketch of the various stages of development of the material or architectural Rome, putting it for architecture in general, though there are some touches peculiar to Roman architecture itself. We will go back, he says in effect, to the very beginning of building :—

“Study mere shelter, now, for him, and him ;  
Nay, even the worst—just house them ! Any cave  
Suffices ; throw out earth ! A loop-hole ? Brave !  
They ask to feel the sunshine, see the grass  
Grow, hear the larks sing ? Dead art thou, alas !  
And I am dead ! But here's our son excels  
At hurdle-weaving any Scythian ; fells  
Oak and devises rafters ; dreams and shapes  
His dream into a door-post, just escapes  
The mystery of hinges. Lie we both  
Perdue another age. The goodly growth  
Of brick and stone ! Our building-pelt was rough,  
But that descendants' garb suits well enough

A portico-contriver. Speed the years—  
 What's time to us? At last a city rears  
 Itself! Nay, enter—what's the grave to us?  
 Lo, our forlorn acquaintance carry thus  
 The head! Successively sewer, forum, cirque—  
 Last age, an aqueduct was counted work,  
 But now they tire the artificer upon  
 Blank alabaster, black obsidion—  
 Careful, Jove's face be duly fulgurant,  
 And Mother Venus' kiss-creased nipples pant  
 Back into pristine pulpiness, ere fix'd  
 Above the baths.

\* \* \* \*

The work marched: step by step—a workman fit  
 Took each, nor too fit—to one task, one time—  
 No leaping o'er the petty to the prime,  
 When just the substituting osier lithe  
 For brittle bulrush, sound wood for soft withe,  
 To further loam-and-rough-cast work a stage,  
 Exacts an architect, exacts an age."

"That way was Rome built," he concludes after one or two more details; and how admirably true is the distinction between the Rome of the aqueducts, the brick Rome, and that of the Caracalla baths; how complete the characterisation of the special qualities of late Roman sculpture, rich and sumptuous in execution without much of intellectual expression. The passage, taken as a whole, might

almost pass as a *résumé* of Viollet-le-Duc's "Histoire de l'Habitation;" and when it is remembered that this poem was written sixty years ago, before any of Viollet-le-Duc's historical and critical essays—before the birth, one may say, of the modern school of architectural criticism—we must form a high idea indeed of the critical intuition of the poet who could introduce such a passage as this merely as a passing illustration in a poem devoted to other and more serious considerations. In a previous page of the same poem Browning refers to the relation between the ancient Roman structures and the architecture of the early Renaissance (seen from a contemporary point of view)—

“ New structures, that inordinately glow,  
Subdued, brought back to harmony, made ripe  
By many a relic of the archetype  
Extant for wonder ; every upstart church  
That hoped to leave old temples in the lurch,  
Corrected by the theatre forlorn,  
That, as a mundane shell, its world late born,  
Lay and o'er-shadowed it.”

Again, how characteristic of northern mediæval architecture is the description, in the

Third Book of "Sordello," of the poet Plara's native city—

" Grim town  
Whose cramp'd, ill-featured streets huddled about  
The minster for protection, never out  
Of its black belfry's shade and its bell's roar ;"

the minster gloomy even at sunset—

" When the sun topped both peaks  
Of the cleft belfry like a fiery wedge,  
Then sunk a huge flame on its socket edge,  
With leavings on the grey glass oriel pane  
Ghastly some minutes more."

With equal vividness does the poet bring before us the old patched castle at Goito, and its room with Saracenic decorations—

" A maze of corridors contrived for sin,  
Dark winding stairs, dim galleries got past,  
You gain the inmost chambers, gain at last  
A maple-panell'd room : that haze which seems  
Floating about the panel, if there gleams  
A sunbeam over it, will turn to gold,  
And in light graven characters unfold  
The Arab's wisdom everywhere ; what shade  
Marr'd them a moment, those slim pillars made,  
Cut like a company of palms to prop  
The roof, each kissing top entwined with top  
Leaning together."

Turning to the miscellaneous poems, it may

be observed that Browning long ago saw and felt what many architects as well as other visitors to Florence do not yet seem to see or know, that the campanile of the Duomo is incomplete, that it should have had a spire or lantern; and in "Old Pictures in Florence" he raises a charge against Giotto's ghost\* for having disappointed him in thus leaving the work incomplete; Giotto's round O, indeed, was perfect, according to the tradition, but he did not perfect his campanile; and it is proposed by the poet, as a fitting task for modern Italy, that the work should be now carried out; so that—

"The Campanile, the Duomo's fit ally,  
Shall soar up in gold full fifty braccia,  
Completing Florence, as Florence, Italy:

and he adds, with a pardonable consciousness of his own critical perception—

"At least to foresee that glory of Giotto  
And Florence together, the first am I!"

One of the peculiarities of Venetian palace architecture is happily touched on in the poem

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\* At the time the poem was written no doubt had been thrown upon the tradition ascribing the design to Giotto.

“In a Gondola”—the contrast between the symmetrical design of the fronts to the Grand Canal—

“Window just with window mating  
Door on door exactly waiting  
Like the staid face of a child,”

and the “playing-face” of the same building on the flank or rear—

“No two windows look one way  
O’er the small sea-water thread  
Below them.”

“The Statue and the Bust” is an essentially Florentine poem, full of picturesque passing allusions, among which the poet has fixed the Riccardi palace in the minds of all his readers as—

“The pile which the mighty shadow makes.

(For Via Larga is three-parts light,  
But the palace overshadows one,  
Because of a crime which may God requite):”

the crime being the strangling of Republican freedom in Florence by the Medici, who built the Riccardi palace for their abode when they rose into power.\* How fine is this glimpse of the

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\* The Medici moved into the Palazzo Vecchio in 1430, as a more ostensible outward assertion of their supremacy. The palace in “Via Larga” (now Via Cavour) was sold to the Riccardi, whose name it still bears, in 1659.

dark mass of building, the home of oligarchical tyranny, overshadowing the otherwise bright street. "Luria," too, is full of touches of Florentine effect and Florentine art, notably one in which he represents Luria, the Moorish warrior, as having made a sketch on the side of his tent showing how the facade of the Duomo might be completed—

"*Braccio*.— Did he draw that?  
*Secretary*.—With charcoal, when the watch  
Made the report at midnight; Lady Domizia  
Spoke of the unfinished Duomo, you remember;  
That is his fancy, how a Moorish front  
Might join to, and complete, the body—a sketch,—  
And again where the cloak hangs, yonder in the shadow."

Another passage in the same drama is worth notice as being so filled with the spirit of the Renaissance time. Luria is not eager for peace, for with peace his occupation as a soldier will be gone, and all Florence will turn again to the arts in which he can take no part—

"Florence at peace, and the calm studious heads  
Come out again, the penetrating eyes;  
As if a spell broke, all resumed, each art  
You boast, more vivid that it slept awhile."

'Gainst the glad heaven, o'er the white palace front  
The interrupted scaffold climbs anew ;  
The walls are peopled by the painter's brush ;  
The statue to its niche ascends to dwell."

Here we have no mere antiquarian memoranda ; we are brought face to face with the Florentine artists at their work ; we seem in the very midst of the life and joy of the Renaissance. Another phase of Renaissance life is delightfully sketched in the poem describing how "The bishop orders his tomb in St. Praxed's Church," in that passion for artistic beauty of form and preciousness of material which, even with ecclesiastics, had entirely usurped the place of spiritual or religious aspiration ; the bishop is chiefly vexed that his predecessor in office had secured the most effective site in the church for his own tomb—

"Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner south  
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same !  
But still my niche is not so cramped but thence  
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle side,  
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,  
And up into the æry dome, where live  
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk ;  
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,  
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,



With those nine columns round me, two and two,  
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands :  
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe  
As fresh pour'd red wine of a mighty pulse."

Over the great Catholic cathedral, as contemplated from a modern point of view, the poet goes into a fine rhapsody, not exactly of description but of the record of impressions, which it is interesting to compare with Byron's colder and more formal reflections on St. Peter's, already mentioned. The poet wanders in his vision on "Christmas Eve" from one abode of Christian worship to another; and after leaving the Salem Chapel on the common outside a manufacturing town, he travels far over the earth in dream, till—

"What is this that rises propp'd  
With pillars of prodigious girth?  
Is it really on the earth,  
This miraculous Dome of God?  
Has the angel's measuring-rod  
Which numbered cubits, gem from gem,  
'Twixt the gates of the New Jerusalem,  
Meted it out—and what he meted  
Have the sons of man completed?  
—Binding ever, as he bade,  
Columns in the colonnade,

With arms wide open to embrace  
The entry of the human race  
To the breast of—what is it, that building,  
Ablaze in front, all paint and gilding,  
With marble for brick, and stones of price  
For garniture of the edifice?  
Now I see it is no dream;  
It stands there and it does not seem;  
For ever, in pictures, thus it looks,  
And thus have I read of it in books  
Often in England, leagues away,  
And wondered how these fountains play,  
*Growing up eternally*  
*Each to a musical water-tree,\**  
Whose blossoms drop, a glittering boon  
Before my eyes in the light of the moon,  
To the granite lavers underneath.”

It is amusing to contrast with such a vivid and sympathetic effusion of soul over the great Renaissance basilica Browning's occasional gibes at the characteristics of modern architecture, such as Bishop Blougram's quiet sneer at the Pugin - and - Rickman plaster Gothic—

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\* Two lines which show how perfect Browning could be, on occasion, in the music of versification, in spite of his too general roughness and apparent indifference to it. It would be difficult to find in English poetry a more exquisite example of “the sound an echo to the sense” than is furnished here.

“ It’s different preaching in basilicas,  
And doing duty in some masterpiece  
Like this of brother Pugin’s, bless his heart !  
I doubt if they’re half-baked, those chalk rosettes,  
Ciphers and stucco-twiddlings everywhere ;  
It’s just like breathing in a limekiln : eh ? ”

a statement which the bishop volunteered as an argument for another glass of wine ; and there have been worse ones. The criticism is a delightful hit at the gimcrack character of the interiors of the revived Gothic of early date ; one can hardly enter a Catholic church of “ brother Pugin’s ” without being reminded of it. According to Browning, it is part of the business of a poet to keep his eye on such practical shams in art, as well as on the poetic side of the subject ; so much so, that in his suggestion as to “ How it Strikes a Contemporary ” the poet appears as “ the *Corregidor* ” of the follies of his generation—jerry-building included—a kind of inspector looking after the preservation of ancient buildings and the construction of new ones—

“ You’d come upon his scrutinising hat,  
Making a peak’d shade blacker than itself  
Against the single window of some house

Intact yet with its moulded Moorish work,—  
Or else surprise the ferrule of his stick  
Trying the mortar's temper 'tween the chinks  
Of some new shop a-building, French and fine."

The scene is laid in Valladolid, by way of eluding a too personal application; but one might find the poet a good deal of occupation in that way in England.

We may conclude our survey with a reference to one more of those rather rare passages in which poets have drawn upon architecture for metaphor and analogy in regard to "the things which are not seen;" and nowhere, perhaps, is architectural metaphor used to such fine purpose as in "Abt Vogler," a poem the main object of which is to suggest the analogy between musical art and spiritual life, but in which the poet commences, so to speak, on the other side of his subject, using an architectural metaphor in the first instance as an illustration of music. In the opening stanzas, the musical composition which the speaker in the poem\*

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\* It is to be regretted that Browning connected this fine poem with the name of a man who was only a clever charlatan, and not in the least worthy to stand as the representative of the loftiest ideal in music. As I have suggested elsewhere, he

has just evolved from the organ becomes, in his idea, an edifice of sound which he has raised—

“The structure brave, the manifold music I make,  
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work ;”

just as Solomon, in Talmudic legend, called on supernatural beings to build him a palace ; and one would lay the foundations, “broad on the roots of things,” of the musical palace—

“And another would mount and march, like the excellent  
minion he was ;

Ay, another, and yet another, one crowd but with many a  
crest,

Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,  
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest ;

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would have done much better for the poem by giving it an abstract title, such as “The Organ-player.” The reason for fathering the thoughts upon Vogler was that he invented an instrument which he called the “orchestrion,” which was to bring all instrumental effects under the hands of one performer. It was actually tried, but it is obvious that it was a total failure. Browning seems to have imagined something very impressive about it which never really existed. The associations connected with a great organ of the usual type would have been much more in keeping with the poem ; and, in fact, most readers suppose that it is the organ that is intended ; but “the musical instrument of his invention” was really this pretentious failure called the “orchestrion,” which died before its inventor, and probably was a mere piece of claptrap.

For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire  
When a great illumination surprises a festal night,—  
Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space to  
spire)  
Up, the pinnacled glory reach'd, and the pride of my soul  
was in sight."

Nor was the palace to his fancy uninhabited—

"For there wanted not who walked in the glare and the glow,  
Presences plain in the place."

Only to those who have some knowledge of both the arts, perhaps, can the full beauty and significance of the opening of this poem be fully apparent; it goes behind the mere outward forms of expression in architecture and music to that purely metaphysical basis of form and structure which is common to both.

Thus we see that some of our modern poets have not only fresh and significant critical ideas on architecture, but that they can raise the subject to a higher plane of intellectual interest than it can generally occupy in actual practice, by connecting it, through imagery and associations derived from architecture, with the highest subjects of contemplation

with which the human intellect can concern itself.

But what seems most noteworthy, perhaps, in looking back over this series of quotations from English poets on the subject of architecture, is the remarkable change in the attitude of the modern poets towards the subject, as compared with the older ones. In the poets previous to the present century, the references to architecture, whether in the way of description or metaphor, rarely evince any knowledge of the art, any interest in its details, or any perception of the significance of buildings as an expression of the feelings and views of the generation of men who erected them. They treat architecture in their poems as Turner treated it in his pictures, as an element in the effect of the whole composition, to be suggested in a broad and somewhat vague manner, without any obtrusion of its detail, which in fact was neglected by poet and painter alike. And in the early part of the present century even, Byron, the greatest poetic commentator on the ruins of Rome and the palaces of Venice, regards them without the slightest indication

of a critical eye, either to their style and detail, or to their significance as an expression of the character of their age, or of the aims of those who built them ; to him they are simply visible relics of a great historic past, having as such a pathetic and tragic interest ; they are valued for their associations, not for themselves. It is only among the poets of the very latest generation that we find indications of a genuine interest in architecture and architectural style for its own sake, a perception of the racial and intellectual significance of style, an eye for special effects of detail, and even of texture and colour in buildings. This change in the attitude of the poetic mind towards architecture is the more remarkable because it can hardly be said that there is any corresponding change in the ideas of the great proportion even of educated Englishmen. The public of this country are, as a body, as ignorant of and indifferent to architecture as they have ever been for the last two or three hundred years ; the political or governing body perhaps even more so. Architecture is hardly ever mentioned in Parliament now, except to



be dismissed as something not worth the money it costs. But we have some respect for poetry still; our two late eminent poets, Tennyson and Browning, at all events enjoyed a great deal of public respect and regard, even amounting to enthusiasm. Possibly the fact that our modern poets have thought more of architecture, and treated it better and in a more truly critical spirit in their works, than those of any previous period, may be accepted as one indication that the subject is worth more serious attention than it usually receives at the hands of Englishmen of the present generation, either in public or in private life.

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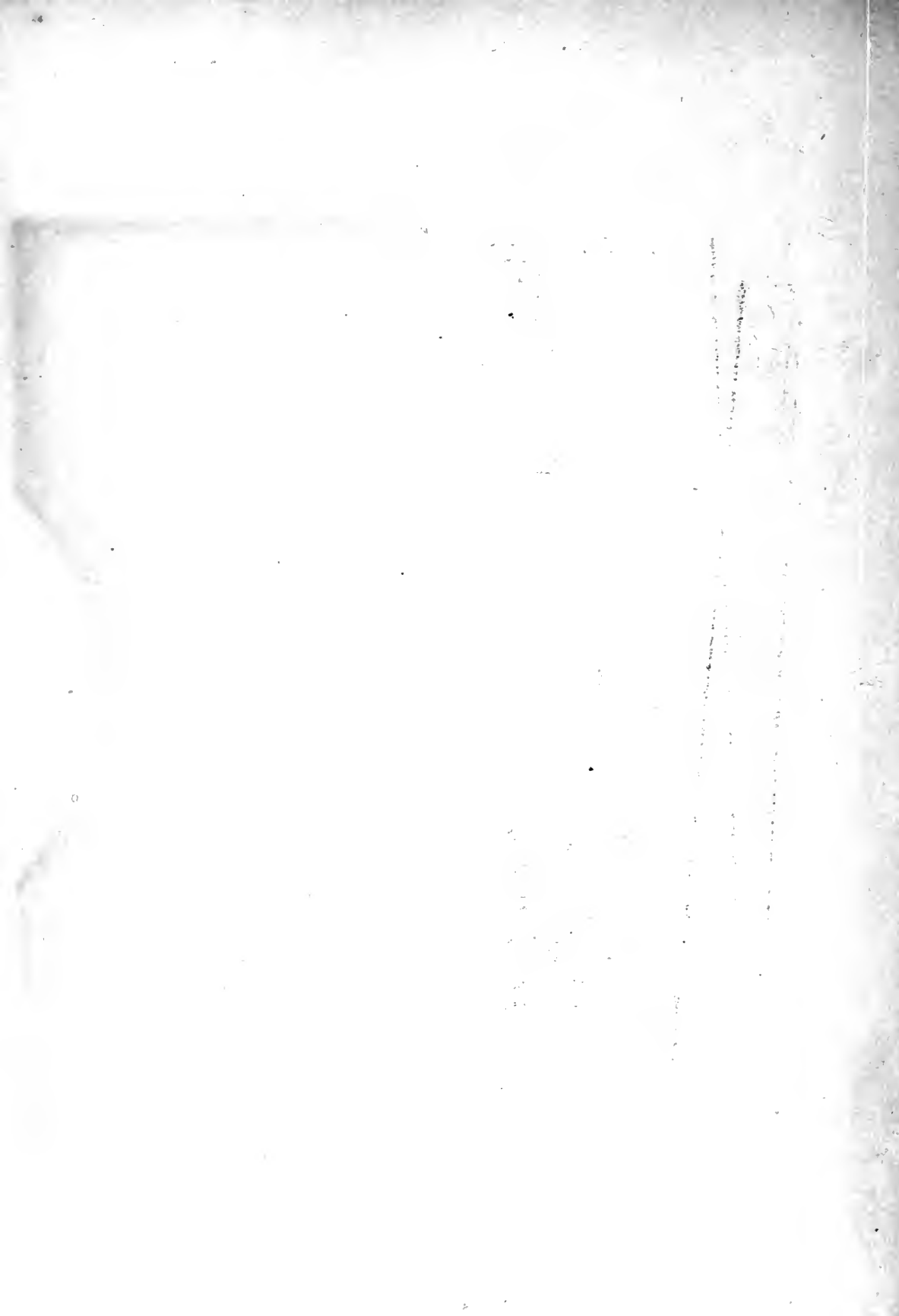
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